



Outdoors in Georgia

March 19

09/80

0

30247JENK404
GUY F JENKINS, JR

4041 WHISPERING FORREST
LILBURN GA

30247

**In this issue:
Turkey Hunting
and Fishing**



George Busbee
Governor

Joe D. Tanner
Commissioner

BOARD OF NATURAL RESOURCES

J. Wimbric Walker
Chairman
McRae—8th District
Sam Cafer
Vice Chairman
St. Simons Island
Coastal District
Mary Bailey Izard
Secretary
Atlanta—5th District
Dalan E. Brown
Twin City—1st District
J. Leonard Eubanks
Pelham—2nd District
Altan Draughon
Pinehurst—3rd District
Linda S. Billingsley
Atlanta—4th District
Marvin Billups, Jr.
Atlanta—6th District
Lloyd L. Summer, Jr.
Rome—7th District
Donald J. Carter
Gainesville—9th District
Walter W. Eaves
Elberton—10th District
Leonard E. Faate
Waleska—State-at-Large
James H. Butler
Marietta—State-at-Large
A. Lea Lanman, Jr.
Raswell—State-at-Large
Wade H. Coleman
Valdosta—State-at-Large

DIVISION DIRECTORS

Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites
Division
Henry D. Struble, Director
Game and Fish Division
Lean Kirkland, Director
Environmental Protection Division
J. Leonard Ledbetter, Director
Office of Information and Education
Mike Hartman, Acting Director
Office of Administrative Services
James H. Pittman, Director
Coastal Resources Division
Robert J. Reimold, Director

Outdoors in Georgia

Volume 9

March 1979

Number 3

FEATURES

The Iridescent Ghost	Charlie Elliott	3
Wild Turkey Restoration— A Status Report	Ron Simpson	9
National Wild Turkey Federation . . .	Gene Smith	12
The Fisherman and the Fish	Rick Anwyl	17
King Mac Attack!	Chris Miller	23
Fishing on Lake Tobesofkee	Dick Davis	27
Old Ways of Fishing	Michael Gillen	31
Simple Safety	E. Burch Roberts	35
The Perversity of Fishing	Gib Johnston	39

FRONT COVER: "The Challenge" by Dr. Allen Hughes. Courtesy, Swon Graphics, Ltd., 4220 Dayton Blvd., Suite N, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37415.

BACK COVER: The end of the fisherman's day near Savannah. Photo by Chris Miller.

Phone—656-5660

MAGAZINE STAFF

Aaron Pass Editor

Susan K. Waod	Managing Editor	Michael Nunn	Illustrator
Lucy Justus	Writer	Bob Busby	Photo Editor
Dick Davis	Writer	Edward Brack	Photographer
Liz Carmichael Jones	Art Director	Bill Bryant	Photographer
Brenda Lauth	Circulation Manager		

Outdoors in Georgia is the official monthly magazine of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, published at the Department's offices, Room 714, 270 Washington Street, Atlanta, Georgia 30334. Publication Number 217140. No advertising accepted. Subscriptions are \$5 for one year or \$9 for three years. Gift subscriptions must be prepaid. Printed by Williams Printing Company, Atlanta, Georgia. Copyright 1979, **Outdoors in Georgia Magazine**. Contributions are welcome, but the editors assume no responsibility or liability for loss or damage of articles, photographs, or illustrations. Second-class postage paid at Atlanta, Georgia. 29,000 copies printed at an approximate cost of \$15,000. The Department of Natural Resources is an equal opportunity employer, and offers all persons the opportunity to compete and participate in each area of DNR employment regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, physical or mental handicap or other non-merit factors.

Change of address: Please allow 8 weeks for address changes to become effective. Send old address as well as new address (old mailing label is preferred).

ISSN 0147-720X

Don't Cheat Yourself

In a few short weeks Georgia's growing army of turkey hunters will invade the forest prepared to match wits and woodcraft with the only bird honored with big game status. Some will be successful, but most will not, since bagging a mature turkey gobbler is considered one of the toughest hunting challenges in eastern America.

Getting a turkey today is a good bit easier than it was ten years ago, though. This is true because there are more turkeys available in more places than there used to be. An aggressive wild turkey restoration effort by the Game and Fish Division (see page nine this issue) and a favorable climate for the past few summers have greatly increased the huntable populations of turkeys statewide.

At the same time, the sophistication of the turkey hunter has kept pace with the increasing hunting opportunities. The carefully guarded "secrets" of the old timers are now known to all serious hunters. Turkey hunters even have their own national organization (see page 12 this issue) through which to communicate with each other and with wildlife conservation agencies on behalf of their namesake bird.

Nevertheless, bagging your turkey is still not easy. And that's as it should be, because this helps preserve the high value of hunting this magnificent game bird. Unfortunately the high value of the turkey also tempts an unscrupulous few to try to acquire a turkey, any turkey, by any means for the status involved. It is hoped that the growing awareness of sportsmen and the efforts of our conservation rangers will help discourage blatantly illegal hunting methods, such as baiting.

Even the average conscientious hunter can foul up through carelessness. In the adrenaline high of an about-to-be-successful turkey hunt, it is easy to take a quick shot at a large black "gobbler" only to find the corpse of a hen when the smoke has cleared. A hen which, had she lived, had the potential of adding six to ten new turkeys to the population each year. Although our wild turkey population is in good shape, we still need every wild hen we've got and so do you. Take the time to be sure, and don't cheat yourself.

Aaron Pass



The Iridescent GHOST

By Charlie Elliott

Before he's hatched, a male turkey lies in his shell, thinking up ways to outmaneuver the human hunter. This is a scientific fact to which any gobbler hunter will attest. There is simply no way any wild creature could develop such wariness and ingenuity to cope with what goes on around him unless this awareness had begun to develop in the pre-kindergarten stage.

Before he gets through pecking his way out of the capsule, the half-saturated little fellow pauses from time to time to look behind every bush, studying every leaf for movement by some unsuspected danger. Even before he becomes a fledgling, he is already developing his sense of survival.

A male turkey keeps at this sort of thing as long as he lives. As a poult he learns to flatten out against the ground and disappear before your very eyes, or to blend into a sprig of cover that wouldn't hide a grasshopper.

The longer he lives, the more this ability increases. It's simply incredible how little cover is needed to hide a 20-pound gobbler that stands 3 feet or taller with his neck stretched upward for a look around.

We were hunting quail on an island off the South Carolina coast. The grassy flats and open woods had an abundance of bobwhites that gave us some excellent shooting, both with coveys and with singles. We were told that the island also contained a sizeable population of wild turkeys. We'd seen plenty of signs, yet in two days of hunting quail we never encountered one of the big birds until late one afternoon. We had a dozen or more bobs and hens scattered out on a grassy flat. The grass was no more than ankle deep, with widely scattered clumps of very low sedge tufts.

Our two pointers had been working that day as though charmed by some canine fairy princess and we were fast approaching our limit of quail. I was a bit miffed at myself because I'd missed the last two easy, straightaway shots, and when the two pointers came to attention in a completely open stretch of meadow, my hunting partner said with a sly smile, "Try this one. If you miss, I'll back you up."

I refrained from making some dignified reply, like, "Go to hell, will you," and we walked in behind one of the pointers that seemed to be certain he was on a quail.

I couldn't have been more startled if an Army bomber had flushed out of the grass right in front of the dog's nose. The gobbler that came off the ground looked *that* big! I was so tense and so ready that I couldn't have stayed my trigger finger if I'd tried. At such close range the shot string almost tore the head off that big tom turkey.

The gobbler weighed about 19 pounds. How it could have remained completely invisible in that ankle-deep grass until we almost stepped on it was a question that had both me and my shooting buddy shaking our heads in disbelief. I didn't think of going back over the ground at the time, but the grassy flat must have contained a shallow depression into which the bird had flattened itself when he first heard us make our appearance on the meadow. There he would have remained and let us hunt on by, if one of the dogs had not caught his scent and pointed. Later I saw a number of old toms pull this very same trick.

Bruce Brady, a Mississippi outdoor partner, relates an experience to show how effectively a gobbler

can disappear when it is apparently standing on bare ground.

He and his son, Bruce Junior, were crossing an old roadway through turkey woods. When Bruce started up the far bank of the road, the boy— from a few steps behind him — suddenly hissed at his dad. Bruce Senior froze, then asked in a barely audible whisper, “What is it?”

“Big gobbler,” the boy said, “standing in the road.”

Bruce held his awkward position and turned his head as slowly as the minute hand on a clock, until he could see for a hundred yards down the roadway. It looked as flat and clean as a stretch of interstate.

“You’ve got an imagination,” he whispered.

“No, sir!” the lad declared under his breath.

“He was there. He didn’t run or fly. He just sort of melted into the ground.”

Big Bruce’s decision came from years of experience with the big birds.

“Don’t move. We’ll stay here for a little while and see what happens.”

His son crouched in a clump of brush where he’d gone down when he’d glimpsed the gobbler, and Bruce remained flattened against the bank, his eyes never leaving the length of roadway below him. For a quarter-hour or more they waited. Bruce was just about deciding that his son had seen an apparition and was tensing his muscles to get to his feet again when a gobbler seemed to materialize out of the earth in the middle of the road, about 75 yards from where he lay.

“I see him,” he whispered. “Don’t move.”

The gobbler stood up slowly, stretched its neck, and looked all around. It remained motionless for long minutes. Then, apparently satisfied that its intruders were gone, that turkey walked slowly into the roadside brush. The two Bruces gave it a few minutes longer, then circled to get in front of it. An hour or more later, it came to Bruce’s call.

They went back and examined the road where Bruce Junior had first seen the gobbler. A logging truck must have gone through a soft spot there, leaving a rut no more than 8 or 9 inches deep. That tom turkey had crowded its body into this depression and literally disappeared while young Brady was watching it.

Bill Rae had a variation of that experience when he and I hunted at Brooks Holleman’s farm in South Alabama. This was years ago and Bill still refuses to believe it. “Even though I saw it with my own eyes,” he says.

In the corner of a wide meadow along the creek, Brooks had planted a rye patch on which his deer and turkeys could graze. Both used it, too, especially in the early spring before the first wild grasses were high enough to become succulent forage.

Brooks built a blind on the woods side of his field, surrounding it with enough cover so that turkeys

could approach the patch from any direction, which they usually did. You never knew whether one would come in from the wooded hillside or from the fringe of brush along the creek in front of the blind. A few very small scattered bushes grew in the meadow between the planted patch and creek, and these made up the only cover for a hundred yards.

Brooks and I left Bill in the blind one morning and went off down the creek to find a gobbling turkey. Bill has a lot of patience, even for a Yankee editor, and he remained quiet with only his eyes and ears busy, shifting his weight occasionally to relieve the numbness that crept into his posterior padding where the ground had poked at it too long.

Not until midmorning did he see a turkey. He admitted it was possible that one might have come up noiselessly behind him, then retreated when he moved to shift his weight. The gobbler he first saw was approaching across the open meadow from the creek. It came warily, as turkeys do, stopping every few yards to listen and to examine the premises with an eye that apparently missed nothing.

The tom was standing near one of the thin, scraggly bushes when something in or around the field caught his attention. Bill didn’t believe he had moved, though he said he might possibly have blinked an eye. The bird made a step or two and went out of sight behind the bush, though that bush didn’t seem large or thick enough to hide a jaybird. Bill estimated that the gobbler was almost within range of his shot string and decided he’d try it when the tom made another two or three steps toward him. He put his gun against his shoulder and waited. After a few minutes when his arms began to shake under the strain, he put it down. The gobbler had not appeared.

Bill sat for more than an hour, concentrating on that bush. The field was open all around it and he could see the meadow beyond it all the way to the creek. Brooks and I found him thus transfixed when we came up on his blind from behind, after a long examination of the field and fringes around it to make certain no turkeys were in sight.

When Bill heard our footsteps close by, he whispered without turning his head, “Sh-h-h! There’s a gobbler over there, right behind that sprig of bush.”

“Which bush?”

He pointed it out. “He just walked behind it and never came out.”

“How long ago was that?”

“More than an hour ago.”

Brooks and I exchanged glances.

“He’s probably on the other side of Wolf Creek by now,” Brooks opined.

“There’s no way he could have left that bush without me seeing him,” Bill insisted.

He stepped out of the blind and we walked out to the sprig of bush. Bill kept his gun ready, as though he expected the gobbler to take to the air any second,

but the field around us was as barren as if no turkey had been there in generations. Bill wouldn't believe it. "There just ain't no way!" he kept saying to himself.

It did seem to be an impossible feat, even for a wise old gobbler, but I've seen them pull many such maneuvers that are not in the books. This must be one of the tricks a turkey conceives while he's still curled up inside his egg shell. More times than the number of hairs on my head—well, more than that because these days I'm getting to look a little like Kojak from the hat-brim up—I've seen a gobbler step behind a tree or bush . . . and disappear. Once he has that body out of sight and out of danger, he turns and keeps the tree trunk behind him and runs straight away, as though the very devil were on his tail and jabbing at him with a pitchfork.

Any turkey can move along a depression so shallow that you hardly understand how even a pack rat could get by without being seen. Probably the most striking example I've had of this habit took place in the Ocoee Management Area of Tennessee, where I've been after gobblers for more than three decades.

I once told the following story to illustrate an entirely different point. It appeared in another book originally listed as *The Outdoor Observer*, but later revised and titled *How To Improve Your Game Eye*. Forgive me for repeating it here, but it seems entirely appropriate.

Most of the gobblers in isolated regions such as Ocoee have virtually the same routine. It seldom varies. If all conditions are right, a tom will gobble on the roost, maybe several times. He wants the hens within hearing to know the vicinity in which he plans to operate. After he hits the ground, he keeps on gobbling until one or more hens cozy up to him, or his ardor either cools or carries him under the sights of a hunter's gun. Whether or not he trades satisfaction with one or more of the hens, he usually shuts down his gobbling about midmorning, loses his interest in sex, and begins to take on vittles.

A tom may satisfy every desire, but he never loses his curiosity. At any time of day, he may answer a yelp or eluek—especially if he's alone. Both toms and hens are very gregarious characters. Many veteran turkey hunters I know spend the entire day in a blind, calling now and then to attract any gobbler that comes by or happens to feed within the sound of a yelper.

I've stuck out a few full mornings in a blind. But as much as I preach about patience, I've never had enough of the stuff myself to keep me there for a full day. I remember one morning when I remained rooted until time to gulp down my noon sandwich. Then I grew restless. I had heard nothing that even remotely resembled a turkey, and my every bone and

muscle ached from long contact with the ground. The flies had eaten me once and were going over me a second time for dessert. So I decided to wander and look for fresh scratching and other signs that might help me locate a gobbler the next morning.

The rest of the day was ahead of me, and I was in no hurry. I made my way from one high cove to another, stopping on most of the backbones of the ridges to relax in a cool breeze and work my yelper, hoping for an answer. One of these spots seemed so pleasant that (after I'd tried a few tentative notes) I put my cedar box into my shoulder bag and just sat back to enjoy the shade and the breeze.

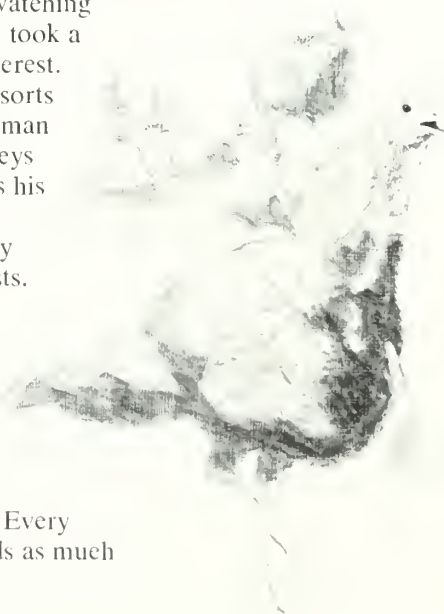
When, after an hour, the log I was on began to grow a new assemblage of knots, I picked up my gun and went prospecting for some more territory. I was on my way into a narrow cove at the base of the ridge when my eye caught a movement near a decaying treetop not more than 25 yards away.

It could have been a packrat, a towhee, a squirrel—almost any creature. I stood still, trying to see it a second time. The floor of the cove was so clean around the tree I could have seen anything that moved away from the mass of limbs. Whatever had caught my attention had to be still there. I walked over for a closer look.

I've never been any more startled than I was then when wings roared on the crest of a little knoll to my left. I swung just in time to get a glimpse of a big gobbler pitching over the contour. He was gone before I had even thought to bring my gun around.

I was even more surprised when I investigated that ground thoroughly and finally figured out what had happened. A depression no more than 12 inches deep ran down that knoll to the treetop. No vegetation of any kind grew around it. The gobbler had flattened himself into the shallow ditch and—to stay out of sight—must have gone up that gully like a snake. I just didn't see how that was possible—but he did. When I reached a point where I could have seen him had I not been watching the treetop so intently, he took a chance and flew over the crest.

A gobbler will pull all sorts of such stunts, and every man who has hunted tom turkeys over a period of years has his own list of experiences in which he was outwitted by one of the iridescent ghosts. Any turkey hunter will tell you about those times, too, if you're willing to sit down and listen and not keep interrupting to regale him with similar experiences of your own. Every turkey hunter I know finds as much



enjoyment in telling about the one that got away as he does in recounting his successes. Somehow a gobbler-chaser takes special pride in the wisdom of an old tom that's smarter than he is.

Brooks Holleman told me about two large gobblers he once saw feeding along the bank of a ditch that ran through one of his open fields. The ditch was deep enough for him to crouch slightly, walk up it, and yet remain out of sight all the way to where he could stand up and get a shot at the gobblers, which were on the north bank.

He tried to crawl to the open lower end of the ditch without being observed by the birds. Just before Brooks reached the point where he could duck completely out of sight, first one turkey and then the other stopped feeding and put his head up. Brooks lay still until the birds went back to grazing again, convinced that they were not afraid but just being cautious.

In a crouching position, Brooks moved up the cut as fast as possible. Then, just at the point where he knew the turkeys should be, he stopped and very slowly raised his head until only his camouflage cap and eyes showed through the tall grass that grew along the edge of the ditch bank.

He couldn't see them, but he knew they were very close. One of the turkeys gave a questioning *putt* in a low voice. Holleman strained his eyes, trying to find them. The bird putted again, and this time the sound came from a little farther away. Brooks let his eyes range the meadow and examine every clump of grass in detail. Not a living creature seemed to be in sight.

Seconds passed and the bird made another note—not an alarmed *putt!* but one more inquisitive than the others, as though the gobbler were not quite certain what the movement at the edge of the ditch had been.

It suddenly dawned on our veteran turkey hunter that the two birds had completely outfoxed him. Slowly he swung from his scouting of the field north of the ditch and looked behind him. While he was stalking up the ditch, the gobblers had pitched over the narrow opening through the field, reached the south side, and were now walking unhurriedly toward a wooded creek nearby. They were just at the outer edge of his shotgun range, so he wouldn't take a chance on wounding one or both. Brooks crouched there helplessly and watched them walk out of sight. "Those birds changed directions on me," he said, "and I'll bet my last load of No. 6s it wasn't by accident. When they spotted me before I entered the ditch they were grazing toward the hill. When I got there, they were headed for the creek swamp, like they knew exactly what I was going to do."

A gobbler counts a lot on his ability to remain motionless, whether or not he is concealed. Maybe he learned that from the gyrations of hunters he has spotted in blinds or elsewhere who attempt to hide when they are afflicted with the fidgets as though they



had fleas. He seems to know instinctively that movement attracts the eye.

Once in North Florida's piney woods, I watched a gobbler that had no idea he was being spied on. He was feeding in vegetation that grew about as high as his shoulders, if he'd had any shoulders.

That gobbler would scratch and peek at something on the ground, then straighten up until only his neck and head were visible. After a long look around, he'd scratch and peek again.

A farm wagon came down the woods road that ran within a few yards of where the gobbler was feeding. He kept his head up, listening to the sounds of the wagon and the driver, who was carrying on a conversation with his mule. When they came into sight, the gobbler pulled his head down, probably crouching in the low brush, and remained hidden until the wagon had gone on down the road.

When all was quiet, he went back to feeding again, in the same spot. My bet is that most of us have been close to turkeys any number of times and never knew they were there. We'd have walked past that aforementioned tom on the South Carolina island, probably within yards, if the dogs hadn't smelled and pointed it.

Another example I had of this gobbler trait was in Georgia's Cohutta Mountains, up against the Tennessee line.

Shortly after dawn I heard a gobbler, and as usual I tried to get close to it before the bird flew down off its roost. The woods were open. And though I didn't get as close as I would have liked, I had a feeling that the tom turkey had either seen me or otherwise knew I was there. He'd gobbled just once on the roost. I tried a variety of calls but couldn't get another peep out of him.

I worked at this calling for an hour, with no response. Then it dawned on me that, for some reason, the gobbler I had heard was in no way interested. If I wanted to look at a turkey over the sights of my shotgun that morning, I realized I'd better stir around and try to find a more agreeable bird. There was also a chance that I might get closer to the tom I'd heard on the roost and make him curious enough to investigate my calls.

I left my hastily constructed blind and moved cautiously toward where I thought the turkey might have flown down. Every hundred yards or so I'd stop and go through my usual routine of low cluck, a wait of a few minutes, a louder cluck, another wait, a slow yelp, wait, louder yelp, wait, and then a gobble on the box. After a quarter-hour in each place, I'd move again.

I passed within 50 feet of a heavy treetop where a giant oak had been felled by the wind. I remember thinking that it would make an excellent spot for a blind. Thirty or forty yards beyond it, I stopped to call again, leaned my gun against a tree, and reached for the wing-bone call that I carry on a thong



around my neck.

I swung around at the explosion of heavy wings, just in time to see a huge gobbler clear the treetops and roar away through the woods toward a mountain slope across the valley. I could only figure that the tom, silent though he had been during the early morning hours, was also curious and had been on his way to investigate my calls. When I met him on that open forest floor, possibly within gun range if I had seen him, he had ducked into the treetop. He'd crouched there and let me walk close by and on out of the danger zone. Maybe he'd even seen me lean my gun against the tree trunk. Anyhow, at exactly the right moment, he took off for the distant slope.

I could only surmise that this was one of those maneuvers he had conceived years before, while he lay curled up in his shell, waiting to be hatched. ●

Charlie Elliott is one of the patron saints of southern turkey hunting. In his long outdoor writing career, he has produced many turkey hunting stories and may be partially responsible for a whole generation of turkey hunting enthusiasts.

This story, "The Iridescent Ghost," is a chapter in Charlie's new book, *Turkey Hunting with Charlie Elliott*, © 1979 Charles Elliott, and is reprinted by permission of the David McKay Company, Inc., 750 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

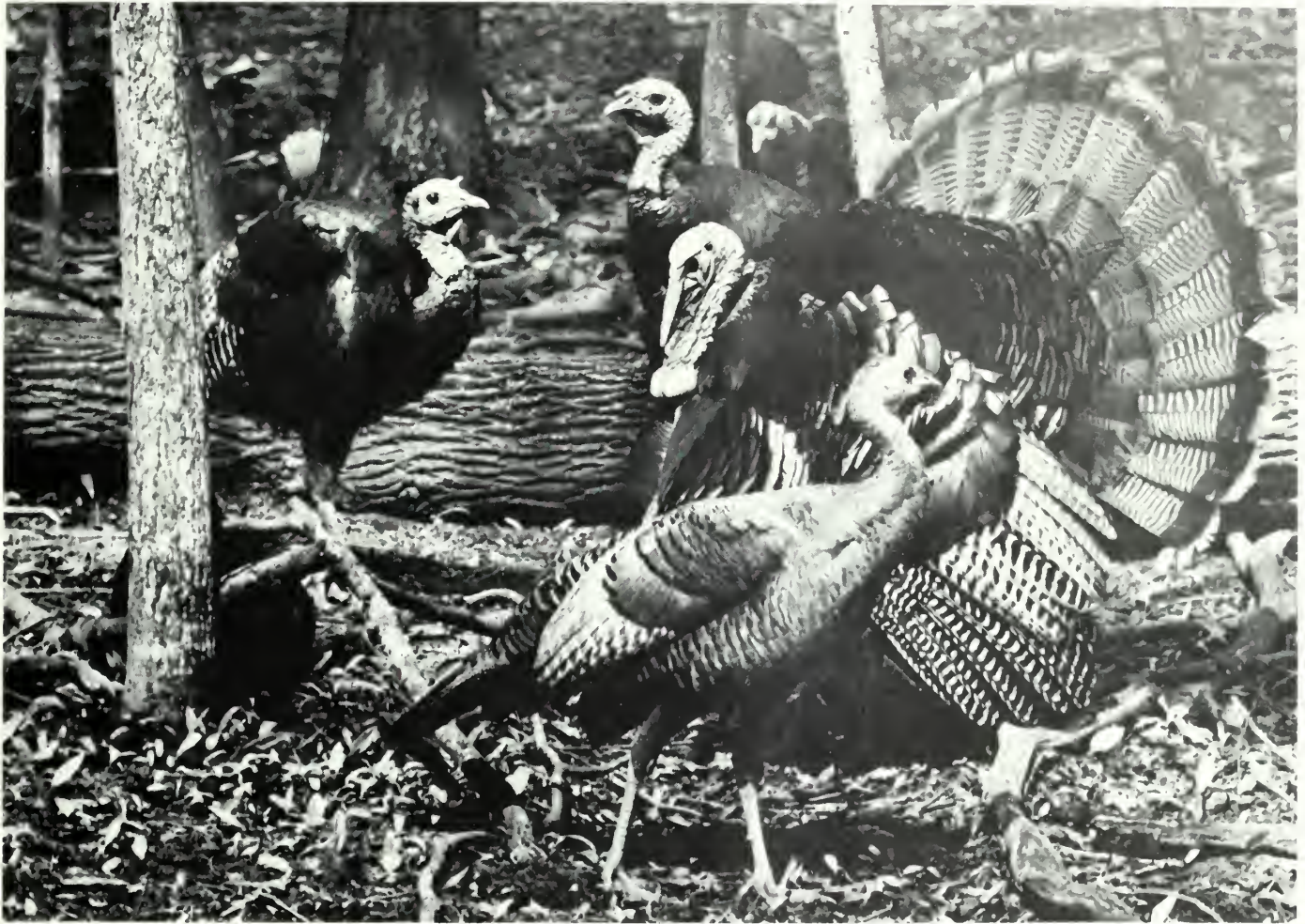
Published earlier this year, *Turkey Hunting with Charlie Elliott* sells for \$14.95. For more information, contact your local bookstore or write the publisher, David McKay Company (address above).



Wild Turkey Restoration

A Status Report

By Ron Simpson



Leonard Lee Rue III

The eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) will probably never be as abundant in Georgia as the whitetail deer because of its more exacting habitat requirements. However, through a concentrated restoration effort begun in 1973, the statewide distribution and population of this magnificent bird are gradually increasing.

At the beginning of our present efforts in restoration of the wild turkey, a county by county inventory

was made to estimate existing populations, their distribution and factors limiting population growth. From these county inventories, the statewide population in 1973 was estimated to be between 15,000 and 18,000 turkeys. Surprisingly, wild turkeys were reported to exist in 121 of our 159 counties. Many of the counties, however, had only remnant populations consisting of a few birds such as a single flock of 6 or 8 along a particular creek or river course.

Trends in county population levels indicated a general decline in turkeys around the state. Populations were reported to be stable in 45 counties, declining in 47 counties and increasing in only 29 counties.

Factors adversely affecting populations were varied. Lack of suitable habitat and reduction of habitat (urbanization, clearing of large acreages for agriculture, clear cutting of timber and increased forest land in pine pulpwood production) were indi-

cated as the major population limiting factors in 136 counties. Illegal hunting was listed as being important in 66 counties. All other factors ranked considerably below these two. Disease, genetic pollution from interbreeding with pen-raised wild turkeys and domestic turkeys, and human activity were indicated in four, three and two counties, respectively. Predation (by free-ranging dogs) was thought to be a major factor in only one county.

Release Site Requirements

Wild turkeys available for restoration purposes are in short supply, so to best utilize those captured, six requirements were established for potential release sites when the effort first started. The present qualifications necessary for a site to be considered for stocking are: 1) the area must be void of wild turkeys; 2) the area has to have suitable habitat; 3) the area must be at least 8,000 acres in size (not necessarily under one ownership); 4) there must be additional areas of suitable habitat adjacent to the release site for turkey population expansion; 5) the area has to be situated for rigid protection; and 6) the area must have relative stability from change for at least the next five years. Sites meeting these requirements are evaluated and rated. The rating an area is given is based on how it compares with other turkey habitat in the same physiographic region. It is updated annually for each proposed site as not all sites evaluated each year can be stocked. Sixty-six potential sites have been recommended, evaluated and rated.

Capture and Stocking Procedures

As mentioned, the number of wild turkeys available for restoration work each year is very limited. Thus, the first and sometimes most difficult step in the restoration program is to locate areas where a few turkeys can be removed without adversely affecting the population and where permission to remove these can be obtained. Well over half of the birds used thus far in the restoration program have come from privately owned lands.

When a source of wild birds is located and permission obtained to

capture a specified number, the birds are enticed to a bait site during the period from January to April. One of two methods is used in capturing the birds, the rocket net or tribromoethanol, a tranquilizing drug. The rocket net is used primarily in areas where shrubs and trees would not interfere with the net when it is fired over a flock. Turkeys in woodland areas where a net cannot be fired are caught using tribromoethanol-treated bait. About two-thirds of the birds captured during the six years of relocation work have been with the rocket net.

Once caught, the turkeys are handled rapidly and with as little excitement of the bird as possible. Vital data (age, sex, weight, beard length and spur length) is collected on each bird. The birds are also banded and wing streamers attached for field identification. Birds are usually transported the same day of capture or no later than the day after capture to the release site.

An average of about 12 birds are released per site. Three adult gobblers and nine hens is an ideal stocking. This may seem like a small number of birds, but over the years it has proven to be very adequate. By not using an excessive number of birds on any one site, more areas can be stocked with the supply of birds available.

The day after a release is made, the immediate release site is checked to determine if any mortality or injuries occurred. This is rare, but the full complement of birds is needed to help assure a successful release. Also, an annual follow-up evaluation of each release is made for three years. Information gathered is primarily on the production of young, population increase and movement of birds on and from the release site. The establishment of the population and prospects of continued expansion can usually be assessed by the end of the third year.

Stocking Results

During the six late winter - early spring trapping seasons between 1973 and 1978, a total of 436 wild turkeys were captured and released. With these birds it was possible to

stock 36 of the 66 evaluated release sites and to partially stock three others. The acreage in the 36 sites totals about 590,000 acres.

Evaluations of these stockings indicate a considerable degree of success and add encouragement to hopes for the future of the wild turkey in Georgia. Success of the releases is best reflected in results obtained on 1973, 1974 and 1975 release sites where final evaluations have been made. Twenty-two sites were stocked with a total of 243 turkeys during these three years. The present estimated populations on all 22 sites is slightly over 1,600 birds, a 560% increase. The magnitude of this increase is really apparent when the increase in populations from releases is compared to populations existing in these counties before the releases were made. The populations, county-wide, are now about 309% higher than the 1973 estimated populations before any releases were made.

Two counties, Webster and Upson, and one wildlife management area, West Point W.M.A., have populations which have expanded to the level at which some hunting is permissible. These areas also supply a few birds for restoration work. The turkey population establishment on West Point W.M.A. is representative of the highly successful stockings. Only nine turkeys were released on the area during the early spring of 1974. By the spring of 1978 the population was estimated to be between 175 and 200 turkeys. Prior to the 1978 spring turkey hunting season, 10 birds were captured for use in stocking another area. The spring gobbler hunt conducted on the area resulted in 10 gobblers being harvested.

What about the other release sites? Eight of the sites have populations which have increased to between 75 and 150 birds. Of the 1973-1975 releases, including those in Webster and Upson counties and on West Point W.M.A., 15 have population responses which are rated as excellent with good prospects for continued population expansion. Populations from four releases are rated as good with fair prospects for ex-



Bob Wilson

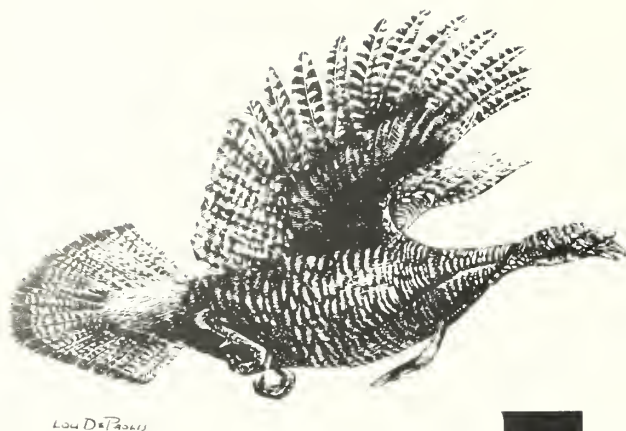
Trapping of wild turkeys for use in restocking efforts has proven to be more successful than using pen-raised birds. Once caught, the turkeys are examined to determine vital data, they are banded and wing streamers are attached for easy identification.

pansion. Movement off these original release sites has occurred as the populations have increased. This expansion is expected to continue until all adjoining areas of habitat are populated. Turkey population response is rated as poor on only three sites. Birds are still present on these areas, but there has been little increase in the number of birds beyond that stocked. The probable major causes of the poor response are reductions in habitat quality from timber operations and the resulting greater access and human activity.

Future Prospects

Overall the turkey population in Georgia has been expanding during the last few years and should continue to grow and expand its range for a number of years because there is a considerable amount of vacant habitat capable of supporting turkeys. However, it must be realized that while there will be gains in some areas, there will also be losses in others as "development" and land use changes occur.

Sportsmen can help the wild turkey by supporting state restorations on harvest. These regulations are designed to allow utilization of this resource without interfering with existing or expanding populations. Through such efforts the sportsman can have an active part in assuring the wild turkey a place in Georgia's woodlands for future generations to enjoy. ●



National Wild Turkey Federation

By Gene Smith, National Wild Turkey Federation

Thanks to a good track record and help from its members and its friends and co-workers in wildlife conservation, more and more people are hearing about the National Wild Turkey Federation, Inc. And the more they hear, the more they want to know. The more they learn, the more they're willing to help make it go.

That is the only logical explanation for the rapid growth and accomplishments of the six-year-old organization, which now has members in all 50 states and a dozen foreign countries, and 75 state and local chapters from coast to coast.

What is the NWTF exactly? It is a national, nonprofit, educational conservation organization working for the restoration and wise management of the American wild turkey and other valuable wildlife resources.

What does the NWTF do? It supports scientific wildlife management on public, private and corporate lands. It upholds traditional American sport hunting. It emphasizes the need for clean air and water and every citizen's right to enjoy an aesthetically pleasing outdoor environment.

Those are general areas, though. Specifically the wild turkey is the

recipient of the Federation's primary attention. It works to see that good wild turkey habitat is identified and preserved; it helps state game and fish agencies educate landowners, sportsmen and the general public to the basic requirements of the wild turkey; it supports financially some of the wild turkey research projects being carried on by colleges, universities and governmental agencies around the country; it has welded together enough grass roots support, through membership strength, to make a decisive difference wherever and whenever the wild turkey or its habitat needs to be defended.

The National Wild Turkey Federation, Inc., was chartered on March 28, 1973, in Fredericksburg, Virginia, by its founder and executive vice president, Tom Rodgers. Rodgers relocated to Edgefield, South Carolina in June 1973 and established the first permanent NWTF headquarters, in modest rented offices.

"Heading up a nationwide movement was the last thing on Rodgers' mind in 1969 when he completed a B.S. in Education at Tennessee Tech," wrote Sam Venable, outdoors editor of *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, last June after an interview with Tom.

"I went back home (to Fredericksburg, Virginia), got married and started teaching," noted Tom. "I also wrote an outdoor column for several area newspapers, then began to sell insurance. Through it all, I was hunting those ol' turkeys, just like I had all my life."

"But the more Tom hiked the ridges and bottoms of nothern Virginia, the more alarmed he became.

"Factories were popping up everywhere. Cities were expanding," he recalled. "What forest land they didn't take was being cut all to hell by timber companies. Turkey flocks were on their way out in some regions of the country. So in 1972, I set out to write a book about the crisis.

"Every time I turned up some good research, I found out just how ignorant I was about turkeys and their management. So I switched to the idea of putting together a magazine on this fine game bird. Next thing I knew, the Federation was shaping up in my mind."

From then on, Rodgers began to solicit help at organizing, both in the professional wildlife management field and in the area of popular support, for he realized that such an organization's strength would lie in dedicated support and involvement—

dues-paying involvement. He was confident that not only turkey hunters but wildlife enthusiasts in general would wish to become members if they were sure their tax-deductible donations and membership dues were put to good use.

Sure enough, the support was there. By the end of 1973, the Federation had 2,000 members. Then, in January 1974, the first state chapter was formed, in Columbia, S.C. One month later the Georgia state chapter was formed as the second on the road to the 75 current local affiliates.

For assistance in laying the organizational groundwork, Rodgers first got the help of an advisory board. Later, a full-blown technical committee of professional wild turkey biologists was enlisted. It was headed by North Carolina's R. Wayne Bailey, a nationally prominent wild turkey authority. Georgia's representative on the NWTF Technical Committee is wildlife biologist Ronald Simpson of Albany who directs the Wild Turkey Restoration project for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (Also see

Turkey Restoration Update, this issue.)

Gradually, Rodgers added several key national headquarters staff positions: an executive secretary, later replaced by a director of chapter development; an editor and publications coordinator; a wild turkey biologist; and an administrative assistant/membership services director.

Through its own efforts, and with the use of excellent contact lists, the Federation was 30,000 members strong by late 1977, and today the membership is near 35,000.

The Federation is governed by an eleven-member national board of directors, national officers which are elected annually, and a six-member executive committee that meets quarterly. As chief administrator, Executive Vice President Tom Rodgers is a member of that committee.

To achieve good communications with its membership, and to accomplish a part of its educational objectives, the Federation publishes *Turkey Call* magazine, which Rodgers began in 1973 as a quarterly. It is now mailed bimonthly, at special educational second class rates. It is

written and edited with the wild turkey enthusiast in mind. *Turkey Call* keeps Federation members abreast of wild turkey restoration and management state by state, it carries a good deal of where-to and how-to articles and illustrations about turkey hunting and calling, it reports chapter activities and other news of interest to the membership, and it speaks out editorially on important matters affecting the status and future of the wild turkey.

A good example of *Turkey Call's* editorial stance appeared in the January-February 1978 issue. The subject was pen-raised turkeys. The editorial pointed out that the releasing of pen-raised birds into the wild was an outdated, wasteful, ineffective, and usually harmful way to go about turkey restoration work, and it explained that the trapping and relocation of pure wild turkeys is the only proven technique that works

This brood of turkey poults is in the most critical period of their lives. Those that survive the next few crucial weeks stand a good chance of making it to adulthood.



Lovett Williams, Jr.

The guiding lights of the National Wild Turkey Federation, from left: Gene Smith, editor of Turkey Call Magazine; Rob Keck, director of chapter development; and Tom Rodgers, originator/founder of the federation.

consistently to bring back wild turkey flocks where the habitat is available but lacking wild birds.

Pen-reared turkeys have lost their wildness and are dependent on man by the time they are old enough to be turned out. Too, they are genetically inferior to pure wild turkeys and are not nearly as intelligent or wary. Also, they are likely to transmit domestic poultry disease organisms to any wild birds with which they might come into contact. This position was approved by members of the NWTF Technical Committee and reflects the feeling of most professional wildlife managers in the country.

That *Turkey Call* editorial contained a strongly-worded resolution supporting scientific wild turkey research and management while condemning the releasing of "game farm" birds. It called on all interests to "assist the cause of the wild turkey by courageously and resolutely opposing the release into the wild of pen-raised turkeys from any source, for any purpose, by an individual, club, organization or governmental agency, except that private shooting preserves shall have the privilege of using such stock, provided adequate precautions are taken against the possible escape of these birds onto occupied or potential wild turkey habitat on public or private lands."

The fantastic comeback of the American wild turkey in recent years shows the validity of the wild-trap-and-transplant method and underscores the need for a professional scientific approach to wild turkey restoration.

According to available literature, the ancestral range of the wild turkey included all or portions of 39 of the original 48 contiguous states. Those not having native wild turkeys were California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.



By the 1930s, wild turkeys were found in only 21 states, and some of those populations were very, very low. The 18 states that had lost their wild turkeys were Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

At the low point, in the late 1930s, there were perhaps only 20-30,000 birds left, of the millions that had once been found in North American forests.

Changing land use patterns had caused the wild turkey's decline: major agricultural expansion; heavy timbering; and frequent, large wildfires. Too, the year-round hunting of wild turkeys, for home consumption and for the market, had contributed to their plight. But then the rebuilding began, and today, 47 of our 50 states, including even Hawaii, have wild turkey populations, thanks to nearly 40 years of scientific restoration and management work. All states except Alaska, Delaware, and Rhode Island now have wild turkeys.

So successful has been its reintroduction to favorable unoccupied

habitat that, as can be seen, the wild turkey is presently found in states beyond its ancestral range. The total population today is placed at just over 1.5 million birds, according to the latest NWTF survey of states.

Thirty-nine states had a spring gobbler season last year, and 28 had open seasons last fall. As populations of transplanted wild turkeys increase, more and more states will permit sportsmen to harvest them.

Large landowners are showing increasing concern for protecting known wild turkey flocks on their property, and they are encouraged by the NWTF to make necessary allowances for these valuable big game birds in their management plans.

The National Wild Turkey Federation has led the way in opening lines of communication with both private and governmental land managers concerning the needs of wild turkeys, and it has encouraged its chapter members to become involved in this type of dialogue at the local level. Only by visiting and discussing turkeys and good turkey habitat needs with land managers can the local sportsman-conservationist-turkey hunter-Federation member hope



The cannon net was a major advance in wild turkey management which allowed the trapping of wild birds for restocking.

to turn the tide even more in favor of the wild turkey.

Other work the Federation does is through grants for wild turkey research. To date, four grants totalling \$7,200 have been awarded to assist wild turkey study projects at the U.S. Forest Service's Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, Morgantown, West Virginia; at the University of Minnesota; at Auburn University in Alabama; and at the University of Arkansas.

The state chapter in Minnesota contributed \$300 toward the study being conducted there, and other Federation affiliates will undoubtedly follow suit as their treasuries build.

The NWTF's Technical Committee screens grant applications and makes recommendations as to those it feels are most deserving of assistance. Of course, the availability of funds is always a consideration.

The Federation gets into other practical matters, too. The production and distribution of 2,000 special turkey transport boxes last year, in cooperation with St. Regis Paper Company, has helped facilitate the transporting of birds to form new flocks. The boxes were given to state turkey project biologists who trap wild birds for relocation.

Other companies have expressed an interest in this program, and it is welcomed help, for every expense that can be spared in the various state wild turkey project budgets will make their own funds go further.

The distribution of the special reusable turkey transport boxes is expected to be an annual service.

The NWTF has three major sources of income: (1) tax-deductible membership dues (regular, \$10; sustaining, \$25; sponsor, \$100; life, \$250; corporate, \$1,000); (2) the voluntary purchase of wild turkey stamps and stamp art prints (the series was begun in 1976, and a major national art contest is held





This captured gobbler and a few lady friends will soon be on their way to a new home. The NWTF supports the relocation of wild birds as the most reliable restocking plan.

annually to select a new design); and (3) the sale of nature and educational materials and other selected items.

Advertising pays a portion of the costs of publishing and distributing *Turkey Call* magazine, but the expenses of printing and distributing educational brochures, posters, and similar items come from general operating funds. The NWTF's budget now totals well over \$300,000 a year, of which 65% or better goes for conservation education, research and restoration endeavors.

The Federation has held two annual conventions — in Hershey, Pennsylvania in February 1977; and at Kansas City, Missouri in February 1978. The third annual national convention and meeting is about to crank up in Birmingham, Alabama on March 15, 16, 17.

As usual, there will be exhibits, awards, workshops, seminars on wild turkey management and hunting, mo-

tion pictures, the annual business meeting, elections, a banquet and all-around family fun.

A highlight will be the Grand National Wild Turkey Calling Championships on March 17 at the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center.

Convention headquarters will be the Birmingham Hyatt House, at 901 21st Street North.

What's ahead for the National Wild Turkey Federation? There are plans for increased growth and plans to build. Ambitious? Maybe. But feasible, you bet.

A solid indication that there's room for growth came in the results of the most recent National Survey of Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife-Associated Recreation in this country published in 1977 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

That survey identified 1.7 million turkey hunters who hunted 8.8 million man-days in 1975, the year surveyed. That makes turkey hunting

the second most popular big game hunting in America, in terms of days of participation, behind white-tailed deer hunting.

NWTF would like to enlist more of that veritable army of wild turkey enthusiasts for its membership rolls. That's the kind of strength and unity that would command attention and would be capable of supporting an ever-broadening range of activities on the wild turkey's behalf while also enabling the organization to provide better and better services for its membership.

The Executive Committee met in Edgefield last August to officially open a nationwide fund raising campaign to raise half a million dollars to construct the nation's first Wild Turkey Research Center.

A 6.62-acre tract, located on U.S. Highway 25 southeast of Edgefield, has been donated to the Federation as the site of the new national headquarters building and research facility. It was given by the Flexo-plate Division of Tranter, Incorporated.

Besides administrative and editorial offices, the new center will house research divisions in both wildlife management and forestry, plus a wild turkey museum and hall of fame, a reference library and, eventually, a living nature center complex featuring all the major subspecies of wild turkey and other selected native wild birds and mammals. It should be an interesting and educational point of interest not only for wild turkey enthusiasts but for everyone.

The NWTF is indeed on the move, and the national awareness Tom Rodgers first envisioned for the wild turkey has materialized. Those wishing to have a part in this work should write the National Wild Turkey Federation, Wild Turkey Building, Edgefield, SC 29824, or call 803-637-3106 and ask what you can do to help the wild turkey. ●

Gene Smith, editor of *Turkey Call* magazine, is from Walhalla, S.C. He is a former editor of *Florida Wildlife* and was a freelance outdoor writer. Gene and his family currently live in Edgefield, S.C.

THE FISHERMAN & FISH...

By: Rick Anupl

Not unlike Lemmings to the sea, each spring Armed & Cloaked they come. Immersed in a fervor of excitement, they begin their quest. What unseen force has brought them? For what purpose? What conceivable allure has this shallow, fast water to man? Speculations are as varied as the feathered hooks they sail into countless pools & jetties. Perhaps, the visions of seasons past, or dreams of strikes to come. Logic holds no answers here. You see, the Trout are once more rising on the Chattooga.

Wool Tweed fishing Cap.... Rumor has it that wearing cap improves your casting:

1890 Theodore Gorden

Considered the father of American Fly-Fishing. He first started fly fishing after reading in (THE FISHING GAZETTE) an English fishing publication, about the art.

CIRCA. LATE 1800'S

FLY-SCISSORS TIED TO fishing Vest..

(THEODORE GORDEN)
1854 TO 1915

Wool Fishing gloves which have the fingers cut out for better feel of the line....

ROD BUTT

CORK/BACK GRIP

CORK HAND GRIP

REEL $3\frac{3}{16}$ " DIA.
APPROX. WT: $3\frac{1}{4}$ oz.

ALUMINUM
REEL GUIDE

SPOOL CAPACITY TO
DTHF LINE PLUS 50 YARDS
OF 20 LB. BACKING

REEL HANDLE

REEL SPOOL HAS
FULLY VENTILATED
CASING FOR MAXIMUM
WEIGHT REDUCTION.

CFO. IV

SINGLE ACTION FLY REEL
ONE TURN OF HANDLE WINDS
ON ONE TURN OF LINE.

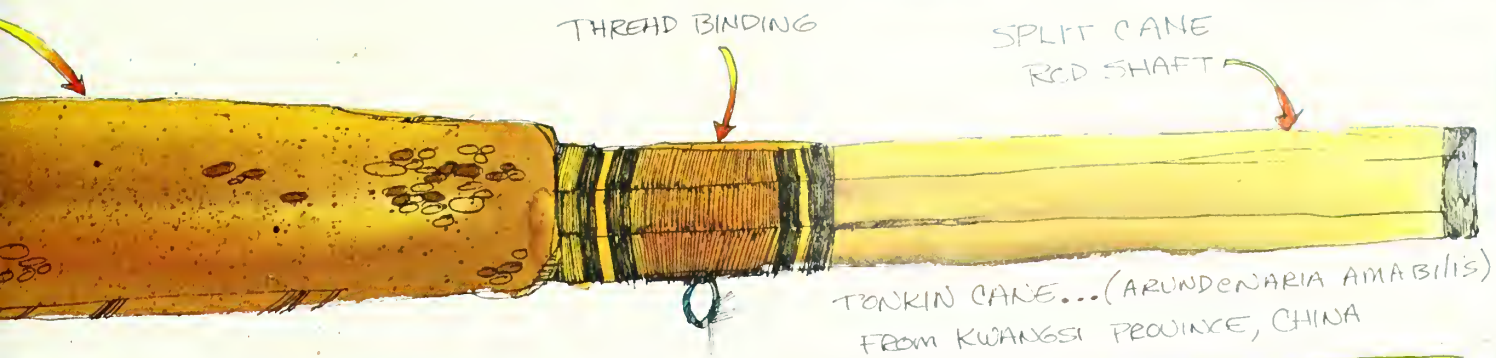
SIDE VIEW
OF CFO. IV REEL
(UPSIDE DOWN)

AGATE OR TUNGSTEN STEEL GUIDE
PREVENTS WEARING ON THE LINE IN
STRIPPING IT FROM THE REEL.

TEMPERED STAINLESS STEEL
KNIFE BLADE.

(ROD BUTT)

ALL PURPOSE FILET KNIFE
GREAT FOR SCALING AND FILETING FISH.



FIRST INTRODUCED BY
HIRAM L. LEONARD IN 1870.

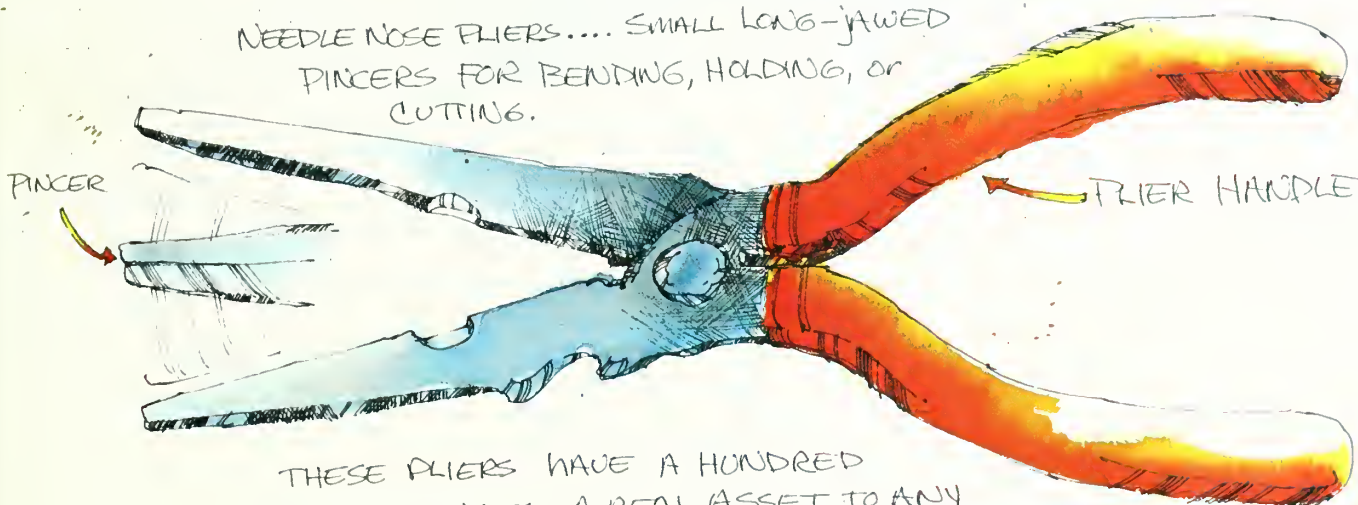
THE SIX SECTION HAND SEAMED FLY ROD
WAS A REAL MASTERPIECE. THE FIRST CORK GRIPS
APPEARED ON RODS IN 1888. PRIOR TO THEN ^{THEY} WERE
PRODUCED FROM HARDWOODS, SUCH AS ASH.

WIPE CLEANER ON
FLY LINE WITH SOFT
CLOTH, OR RAG.



HELPS KEEP
FLY-LINE DRY
AND FLOATING

NEEDLE NOSE PLIERS.... SMALL LONG-JAWED
PINCERS FOR BENDING, HOLDING, OR
CUTTING.



THESE PLIERS HAVE A HUNDRED
DIFFERENT USES. A REAL ASSET TO ANY
FISHERMAN'S TACKLE BOX.

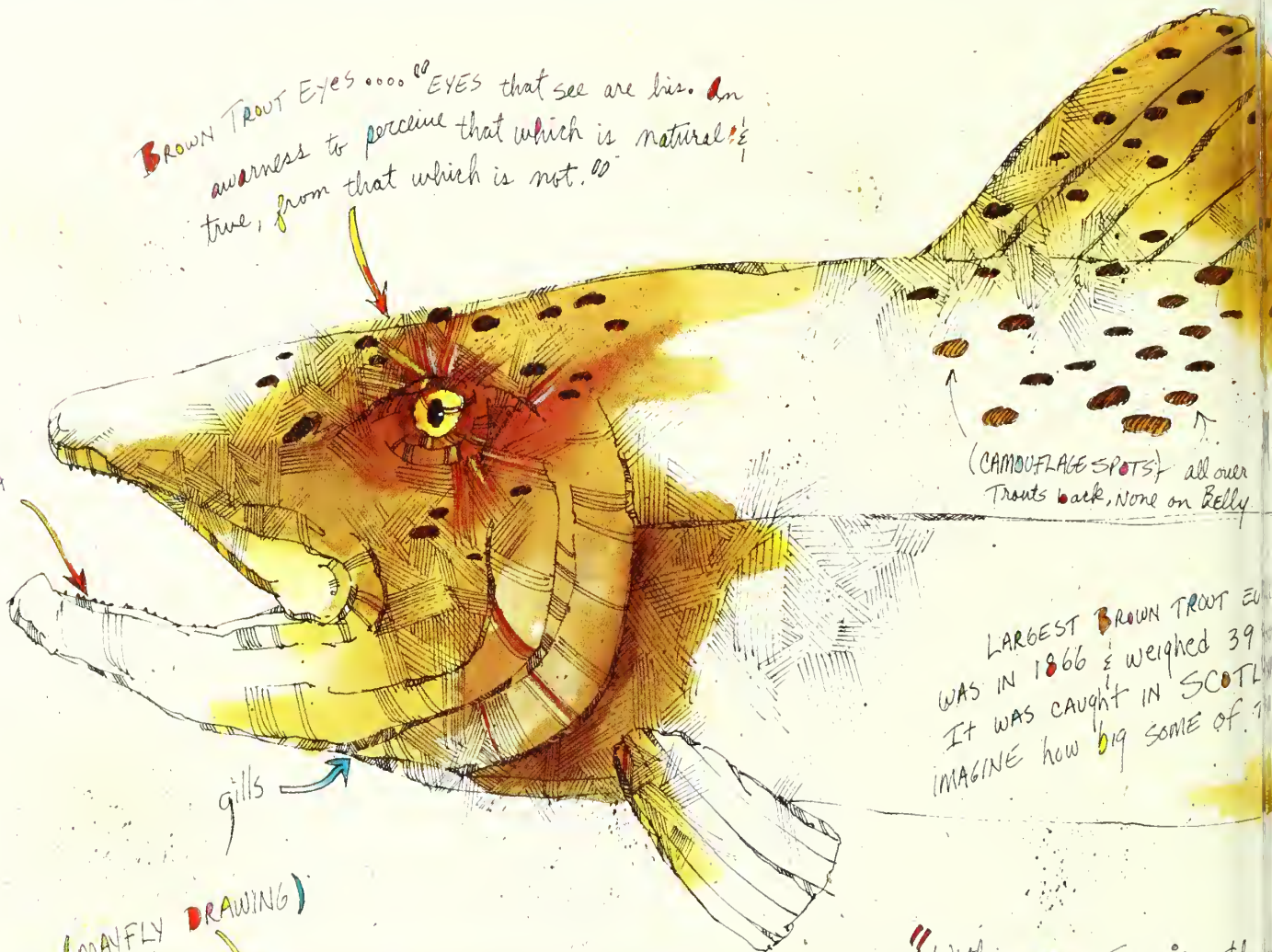


WOOD HANDLE IS COUNTER-BALANCED AGAINST WEIGHT
OF BLADE TO MAINTAIN BUOYANCY IF KNIFE IS
DROPPED IN WATER.

R. J. W. 47

BROWN TROUT Eyes "EYES that see are his. An awareness to perceive that which is natural & true, from that which is not."

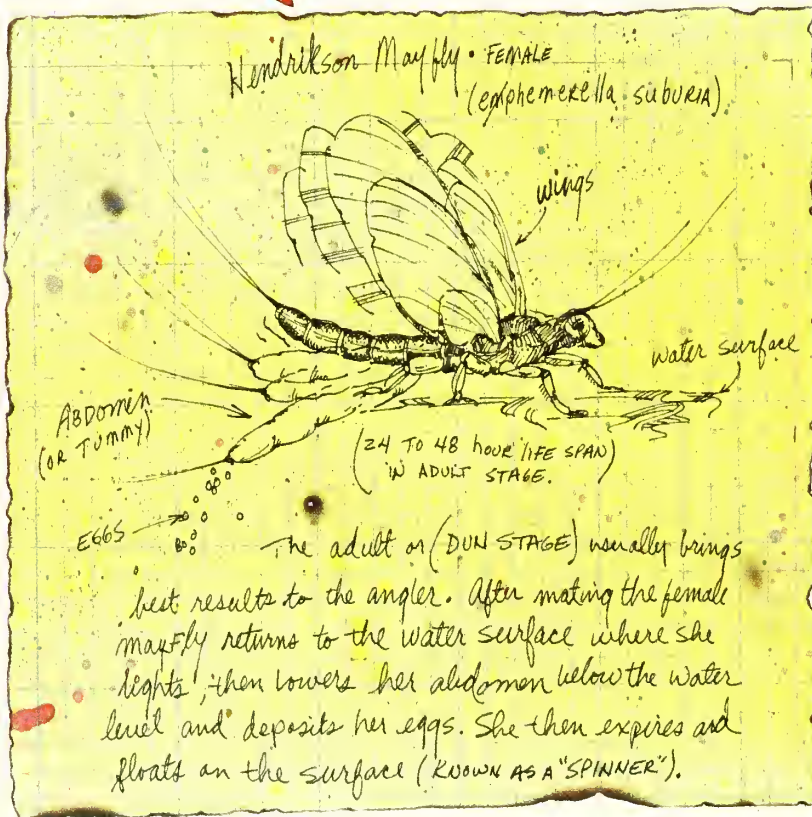
TROUT TEETH



(CAMOUFLAGE SPOTS) all over Trout's back, None on Belly

LARGEST BROWN TROUT EVER WAS IN 1866 & weighed 39 lbs. IT WAS CAUGHT IN SCOTLAND. IMAGINE how big some of them are.

(MAYFLY DRAWING)



"Within any Species there is an almost mystic attached. So it is with the Brown."

BROWN TROUT Food...

Brown trout eat mayfly's like people eat popcorn. Especially trout 3 to 4 pounds or smaller. The big hummers just eat them when there is, what's called a hatch. A hatch is when 100's of the mayfly's hatch out at the same time. That will bring the real big ones out of their holes, & up to the surface.

BROWN TROUT... (SALMO TRUTTA
OR
(SALMO FARIO)

Trout that swim out to sea and then come back to spawn are called this. Trout that don't are called the other.

DORSAL FIN

TAIL OF TROUT
(this is the good part
to eat.)

ATERAL LINE

UGHT
S 8 OUNCES.
YOU CAN JUST
ARE BY NOW....

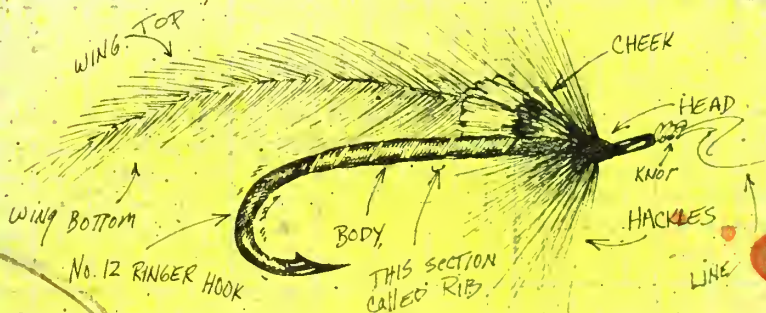
always is one to
verence is justly
rout and so it is with

ARTIFICIAL
BROWN TROUT FOOD...

Some more information on Brown trout, the big Lunkers (ALSO CALLED HUMMERS). When a brown gets to be say 15 LBS or so, he finds himself a nice hide out, under, or behind some fallen log, or rock, outcropping. There he just hangs out, usually only coming out to eat after dusk. This enhances his reputation as being a real challenge to catch. The drawing at right is what you fool 'um with.

(FAKE FLY DRAWING)

WET FLY... (CHIEF NEEDABEH)



The basis for all wet fly patterns is the imitation of live natural food. This type of fly is most effective when fished as an emerging insect about to leave the water. Considered by experts to be the most effective patterns are those which closely imitate one of the life cycle stages of the Mayfly.



King Mac ATTACK!

By Chris Miller
Photos by the Author

As the first mate let the first line out behind the boat, I had my doubts about our success. When the right amount of line was out, he put the rod in a holder on the side of the boat and let another line go back. When it got to the right distance, he flipped the reel into gear and set it on the other side of the boat in a holder, and we all settled down as our day of trolling for king mackerel began.

Everyone on board was excited, but I had been listening on the marine radio on our way out and none of the other boats were having any luck so I knew we were in for a long and probably unsuccessful day. I settled down for a little snooze.

"Got him on!" yelled the mate, and I turned in time to see the port rod jerking wildly. Then the starboard rod started jerking too. Quickly the mate handed a rod to the man already in the fighting chair, and our first fish was on its way in.

This was no easy matter with the boat maintaining trolling speed, but in due course the planner came in, the mate grabbed the leader and, with an expert's touch, flipped a fish over the stern at our feet.

"Outstanding!" he grinned. "A bonito. Now we've got the best bait you can have for the rest of the day!"

But there was still another fish on, so he grabbed the other rod and handed it to the new man in the fighting chair. This took longer with a good bit more fight in the fish, but in due time I could see that beautiful flash of silver down in the depths that told of a good fish being brought up. Before long, mate Juddy grabbed the leader and heaved a beautiful king mackerel aboard!

I've been lucky early in a trip too many times for this to excite me, but I watched carefully as mate Juddy cut the skin off the bonito and threw the insides overboard to some lucky shark. He carefully cut the two halves of skin into strips about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch wide by six inches long; several of these were kept topside and the rest went into a cooler to stay fresh.

On each lure went a bonito strip. The skipper, Captain Ralph Vick, Jr., explained that no self-respecting king could let those strips go past him without hitting one of them.

Both lines went back out and settled down to trolling depth. Both crew and the charter group watched ear-

fully for a couple of minutes, but the rods did not move so I smugly lit my pipe and got comfortable again for the long wait.

"Got him on!" the skipper yelled, and I turned in time to see a rod about to jump out of its holder. An eager fisherman was already in the chair and the battle was on again.

This day I was aboard "The Lucky Lady," a beautiful charter boat out of Hilton Head, South Carolina and we were about 45 miles due east in the Atlantic. Many people do not realize how good the fishing is in this Georgia-South Carolina area.

Early that morning before the charter group arrived, I was thinking that Captain Ralph seemed a bit young for this sleek craft out in the ocean. There were a few minutes to spare before we left and the captain said, "Come on, Chris. I'd like you to meet my Dad."

It turned out that the tall skipper of "The Waterway," a charter boat about four down from Ralph's, was Captain Ralph Vick, Sr. Captain Vick, Sr. has been the winner in several major billfish tournaments and is considered one of the top billfish skippers on the East Coast. I learned as I looked through his scrapbook of newspaper and magazine writeups. I began to understand how Ralph, Jr. had earned his command.

There are usually four or five charter boats out of Hilton Head every day and all of them are out of the Harbor Town Yacht Basin, in a beautiful setting of palm trees and sea gulls. Savannah, my home, about fifteen miles to the south, also has a couple of charter boats that go out regularly from a less country club-like setting. In this area of quiet southern charm, these boats are busy year-round taking natives and tourists out to fish in the deep blue water where pirates once sailed.

This is not an inexpensive way to fish. A full day's charter costs from about \$250 to over \$400 depending on the dock area and sleekness of the craft. Most boats carry up to six passengers to split up the expenses and fish caught. A new boat out of Savannah carries 40 people out to the Snapper Banks to bottom fish. This type of fishing is quite productive and much less expensive than hiring your own charter boat.

The lines were getting strikes quite regularly now so Captain Vick radioed out to a friend, "Pilot Boy, this is

Chris Miller is a photographer and freelance writer (as well as an avid fisherman and hunter) who lives in Savannah.

Bonito strips (near right) caught early in the day made fine bait for king mackerel. (Below) Bringing in a king. This charter group caught more than just mackerel, though—they even landed a barracuda. (Far right) Waiting for another strike aboard the Lucky Lady.





Lucky Lady. We're having a 'king mac attack' over here and I've got a marker buoy out if you'd like to head over to join us." I learned that it is common among the skippers to help each other out like this — it works to everyone's advantage.

Of course, not only his friend could hear that call, and in twenty minutes there were six smaller boats in addition to the "Pilot Boy." Imagine being 45 miles out in the Atlantic and having a traffic jam.

The white line flasher recorder on the bridge is the reason the Captain was so sure he was in the fish, I learned. He said that there were plenty of fish out there, but they stayed bunched up and were hard to find. When he finds a good spot he notes the location on his loran radio locators, then on future trips he can steam to the same spot to see if they are still there. These units will not make the fish bite for you, but they can sure save you some time fishing where there are no fish.

He explained as he pointed to the recorder, "We are in about a hundred feet of water over a fairly rough, rocky bottom. There - that gray mass is a school of bait fish and those curves under them are the kings."

"Got him on," yelled the mate and I began to realize that a logical combination of the right lure presented at the right depth in a spot where they knew fish were was paying off well.

The charter men were having a ball taking turns in the chair and everyone forgot who had caught what. Cold beer and thick sandwiches made the warm day, blue skies and smooth water seem even better. We were having a great day, and my camera was taking it all in. Some porpoises came by and put on an aerial show for us, so I put on another lens to photograph them. After one shot, someone yelled "Got him on!" and I turned the camera to the stern again.

Occasionally the other boats were close enough so I could tell that they were not having a good day except for the other charter boat which was doing ok. Why were we having such luck in the same area? I started to pay close attention to our methods and to theirs to spot any differences.

"Aren't you trolling a bit faster than they are?" I asked the captain.

Quickly he looked at me and then back again. "Maybe a little bit."

"Well, it looks like more than a little bit to me. Some of them are barely moving and we are cruising right along."

"In the open ocean these fish are fast. Trolling a bit faster than most people gives our lures a more natural appearance. These kings can still catch that lure if they want to with no problem."

Back down on the deck, I found mate Juddy and asked about the rigs he was using.

"I've got 4/0 reels onto these boat rods. We use forty-pound line to a planner," he said as he showed me a three by six inch model of a planner.

"The planner uses the motion of the boat to pull the lure down fast - the depth is determined by several

things, but the amount of line out is the most important. I've got enough line out to troll about seventy-five feet or so.

"Then when a fish hits the lure, the planner will reverse and use the boat's motion to pull the fish up.

"I've got about thirty feet of thirty-pound leader out," he said. "Most people don't use that much, but I think it helps us catch more fish.

"Today we are using a six-inch spoon with a single hook and a blue and white lead body Sea Witch with a tandem hook arrangement. There are sharp 9/0 hooks and these lures seem to be working for now, but if we were not catching fish and other boats were, I'd change in a second. Hey! Got him on!"

A man quickly jumped in the fighting chair and started reeling in the fish—or at least tried to. This was harder than the other fish. Fighting against the fish and the speed of the boat, he couldn't keep the rod up so a friend came along to help him. The rod was still bent over and jerking wildly when I saw the planner splash to the top about fifty yards back. As it came closer I saw that beautiful flash of blue silver deep in the water that meant a great fish was fighting.

Soon there was a large splash on back and Juddy yelled, "A barracuda! And a nice one too!" Then the planner came over the stern, and soon Juddy deftly flipped the 'cud over the stern toward our feet. One good look at those teeth and we cleared the deck in a hurry! I suspect by now that fish is on a den wall in Warner Robins, Georgia, the home of the charter group for the day.

Around the middle of the afternoon the action just seemed to stop. The smaller boats hadn't been catching fish to begin with, and now they dropped off one by one and headed west for home. Captain Ralph held his post and we continued to troll.

"They're down there", he scowled, "but they won't bite. We'll troll a bit longer and wait 'em out."

In the lull I talked with the men about the different types of saltwater fishing done in this area. There are basically four types for a fisherman depending on how far out in the ocean he wants to go.

The tidal creek and river fishing is excellent and very accessible to someone with a small boat. Flounder, sea bass, spotted trout, sheepshead and tohers are taken regularly, and the local fish camps with all facilities will be glad to direct you to a likely area. Many a shark is caught there off piers and from boats, too.

With a larger boat you might go 12 miles east of Savannah to "The Tower," a giant structure there to aid navigation. Trolling and bottom fishing there are quite successful.

An even larger boat will be interested in going 40 miles out to the Snapper Banks where the red snapper abound. You'll catch a mixed bag there, but that wonderful red snapper is what most people are looking for.

For the real adventure seeker, there is the Gulf Stream about 80 miles offshore with marlin and sailfish.

My specialty is shark fishing which is done best from

April to September because of the warmer waters. Many people are now fishing for the small sharks, around five to seven feet weighing around 75 pounds, with tackle that is considered quite light. My favorite rig is loaded with twenty-pound line and a lot of it, but I've caught sharks four times that heavy with it.

After recently going over a world record book for fish, I am positive that there are world record sharks within ten miles of shore in the Savannah-Hilton Head area. Too many of the guys who fish with broomsticks for rods and use a thousand yards of hundred-pound test have told me, "I just couldn't stop him — he cleaned the reel out!" A serious effort directed toward huge sharks would have to hook into some good-sized creatures.

The Lucky Lady continued to troll that day — no fish for two hours. "We'll get them — just wait awhile," said the captain as he looked at the recorder, but everyone except me was inside having lunch.

"Got him on!" yelled Juddy at last and the men came pouring out of the cabin. I could just see the last small boat on the western horizon; that left the two charter boats alone.

In ten minutes another king was pulled aboard. Then the "Pilot Boy" had a hookup. We were back in business. The top came off the live well and stayed off.

The charter group men were jumping in and out of the fighting chair like school boys and reeling the fish in again. Later in the afternoon the strips of bonito began to run low, the group's energy was running low, and the sun was getting low; it was time to go home. The twin diesels were idled back while the buoy and all lines came in, then they were run up to a fast cruising speed back to Harbor Town.

For the relaxed two hour return trip, I climbed back up on the bridge with the skipper. "You've had a good day. Was it just luck?"

"It's always luck when you catch fish," he said. "We just try to do the right things in the right place that will put the odds in our favor. Today, and most days, it worked out okay, but some days nothing works."

"What do you do that most fishermen don't?" I asked.

"We just fish more seriously than most people do. And the white line recorder helps a lot — I don't understand why all medium size boats don't have one."

Back at the dock the captain and mate filleted the kings for the men who carried some ice chests and a garbage can full of fillets to a waiting truck. They had two barracuda, one small shark, the bonito, and *several* king mackerels. This day's fishing would be remembered long after the price of the charter would be forgotten.

A charter trip is not difficult to arrange. A call to the Harbor Town Yacht basin on Hilton Head Island at 1-803-671-2704 or to the Savannah Chamber of Commerce at 1-912-233-3067 can get you started on a place to stay and a charter boat. Or you can bring your own boat; there are plenty of private and public places to put in. ●

fishing on **Lake Tobesofkee**

By Dick Davis

"Brought in most of them on a four-inch green plastic worm," Bob Skinner said as he showed off the impressive array of pound-and-a-quarter-plus largemouth bass he and his family had boated in a few hours of fishing. Bob's young son could hardly hold up his end of the stringer of 23 bass totaling more than 33 pounds of good eating.

We had pulled alongside Bob's bass boat on Bibb County's Lake Tobesofkee on a sun-filled, picture-book day. The brilliant sun danced on Tobesofkee's waters, and along the shore dogwoods, redbud trees and variety of wildflowers were showing their colors. Even the big-mouth bass, crappie and cats seemed to know it was really spring and time for action — and they were doing their part.

"We couldn't ask for better conditions for bass fishing — these slightly stained waters are just right," explained Frank Patterson, Lake Tobesofkee's Assistant Director, as we pulled away from Bob's boat and out into the mid-channel of the lake to look for more anglers with good catches. We found them — in many of the coves and dips of the lake's shoreline. Crappie, bullheads and channel cats, hybrid bass, white bass and sunfish all share Tobesofkee's waters with the largemouth, and nearly all showed on weighty stringers.

A classic middle Georgia fun spot



Dick Davis

and fisherman's mecca, Lake Tobesofkee is a water sports outdoor recreation complex in the Macon-Bibb County area. The six-mile long lake with 1,750 acres of water, 35 miles of shoreline and 700 acres of adjoining parks shines like a jewel on the landscape.

Bank fishing seems to be just as popular as boat angling — or more so — at Lake Tobesofkee. This is a big plus and opens up a new dimension in outdoor recreation for those who do not own a boat. Angling from terra firma is especially convenient for many in the communities of Bibb County and surrounding counties who have only short periods

to fish. With a few minutes on the road, they can bait a hook, wet a line and soon have some delicacies in the skillet.

A prime fishing spot at Tobesofkee is the "fingers section" at the upper end of the lake. The broad area consists of five sections of man-made canals interspersed with peninsulas or "fingers". Originally constructed as a waterfowl feeding and resting sanctuary, the canals afford excellent crappie, bass, cat and sunfish angling, are easily accessible by ear or on foot, and are among the last spots in the lake to become stained during adverse weather.

Another popular and productive



spot for bank fishing is below the dam and spillway.

Camping, swimming, picnicking

Four separate parks, with beaches fronting on Lake Tobesofkee, are included in the recreation complex. Claystone Park and Sandy Beach Park are located on the north shore of the lake on Moseley-Dixon Road, off Highway 74. Flintrock Park and Arrowhead Park are on the south side of the lake, off U.S. Highway 80 and Highway 22. Claystone and Arrowhead parks have campsites for tents or recreational vehicles. These campsites are serviced with water, electricity, restrooms with showers and laundry facilities. Picnic tables and facilities abound throughout all the parks, and concession stands operate in all parks except Flintrock.

Each park has a white-sand beach with swimming in designated, protected areas. The parks have recreational facilities for all ages, including swings, slides and miniature golf. Sandy Beach Park has six modern, lighted tennis courts and a water slide.

There are paved boat launching areas on Lake Tobesofkee, located at three of the four parks. Eight ranges are at Claystone, six at Flint-

rock and five at Arrowhead.

Originally constructed to provide watersport, camping and outdoor recreation for the people of the Macon area and seven surrounding counties, the Tobesofkee recreation complex now attracts visitors from many parts of Georgia as well as from throughout the nation and Canada. "Metro-Atlantans fish Tobesofkee's productive waters in increasing numbers, campers and anglers journey to the strategically located and easily accessible lake from many parts of the state, and north and south travelers from Interstate Highway 75 use the campgrounds as a pleasurable stopover break in their journeys," says Clyde Walters, Tobesofkee's director.

Owned and operated by Bibb County, the recreation area has facilities to accommodate up to 10,000 persons per day, with modest user fees. The lake and recreation area is open year-round, every day from 6:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

What About Fishing?

Fisheries biologists of the Department of Natural Resources have studied Tobesofkee since its impoundment in 1969 for the purpose of managing the sport fish harvest for the optimum in fishing recreation

and game fish production.

"Because of its fish population, the species present and the standing crop of fish, Tobesofkee is similar to other impoundments in the Southeast," says Les Ager, DNR fisheries biologist. "The lake is small compared to some others in Georgia and can be more easily worked and studied."

Tagging studies and creel surveys have been conducted by DNR biologists for the last two years to estimate the size of the population of various species and the mortality rate among the species. The total fish population is being studied.

In 1977 approximately 1,300 fish of all species were tagged and this year about 1000 were captured and tagged and returned to the water. Anglers are offered \$3 for each tag returned. Of the fish tagged in 1977, 46 percent of the largemouth bass have been returned by fishermen, as have 36 percent of the crappie, 22 percent of the sunfish and eight percent of the catfish. In the first three weeks since the 1978 tagging was completed in March, 40 percent of the crappie tags and 18 percent of the largemouth bass tags were turned in by fishermen. The tagging and creel studies are planned through 1980.

The results of the creel surveys and the tagging studies show that in 1977 the approximate total harvest of fish at Tobesofkee was 11,000 largemouth bass, 5,000 crappie, 6,000 sunfish and 5,000 eatfish. This is based on 83,000 hours of fishing on the lake during that year — about 50 hours of fishing per surface acre of water. Forty-five percent of the fishing on the lake last year was for largemouth bass.

What's the fishing outlook for Tobesofkee for this year and the next two or three years?

A Largemouth Lake

Les Ager says that studies indicate that a large proportion of the largemouth bass currently in Tobesofkee are the legal size of 12 inches or larger. He expects that fishing success through this year will continue good for largemouth and all species, but that the impact of depletion of

the largemouth bass population due to poor spawns and/or survival in 1976 and 1977 will be felt by next year, adversely affecting the largemouth fishery at Tobesofkee by next spring. "But," Ager adds, "the decline of the legal-size bass population that is occurring and will continue to occur has stimulated the growth of fish of other species in the lake, and the harvest of these should substantially improve, thus maintaining a very good fishery overall but shifting the fishing pressure to species other than largemouth."

Crappie fishing, for example, has steadily improved in the last two years. The average size crappie in the creel study has been about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound, with single fish over two pounds not rare, and the numbers being caught have increased on the average.

White bass are showing signs of substantial improvement both in number and size. Fishing for this species is the best in three years, and this trend is expected to continue.

Hybrid bass — a cross between white bass and striped bass — is the only species stocked in Tobesofkee by the Fisheries Management biologists of the Game and Fish Division. These hybrids are expected to do increasingly better — increased numbers and accelerated growth — and in the years ahead should generate a good fishery.

Though Tobesofkee has never been known for outstanding bream fishing, biologists look for an increase in the average size of these species taken in the next two or three years.

As for eatfish, Tobesofkee has always afforded good angling for bullheads or "speckled eats," as they are known to some, and this is expected to continue.

Overall, Lake Tobesofkee affords good natural habitat for its fish species, both in food and cover. Much of the upper end of the lake was impounded over standing timber.

The anticipated decrease in the largemouth bass fishery at Lake Tobesofkee next year is explained by Les Ager as resulting directly from the lack of good spawn and survival of largemouth in 1976 and 1977.

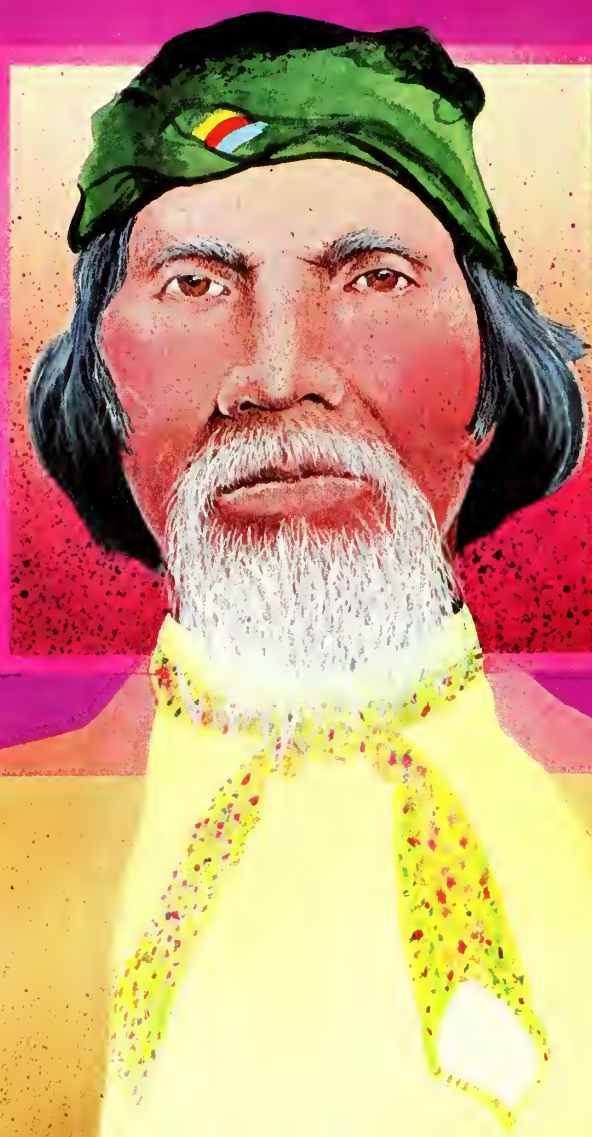
Forage fish, primarily threadfin shad, were scarce during both years due to the unseasonably cold waters.

There was an excellent spawn and survival of largemouth at Tobesofkee in 1975, and this 1975 class of fish has been supporting the good bass fishery for the last two years. Most of the largemouth bass of the 1975 spawn are now believed to be over legal size — 12 inches or larger. "This year the largemouth bass fishing is excellent," Ager says, "with plenty 14-inches and larger, and fish of this species five pounds or more are more common now than in several years. We have tagged largemouth in excess of 10 pounds at Tobesofkee."

Fisheries management of Tobesofkee's waters in the years following the study's completion will be directed toward obtaining good spawns and survival in all years. Biologists have in mind several possible methods of doing this. One is through control of the lake's water level, especially raising the level at spawning time. Another method is through installation of better shoreline cover, possibly including special plantings. A third possible technique would be varying the legal size limit from year to year to protect certain size classes of fish. Les Ager emphasizes, however, that "a larger size limit than the legal 12 inches on largemouth in Tobesofkee would not have prevented next year's anticipated depletion of the population of this species."

Lake Tobesofkee, located almost in the Macon suburbs, is easily accessible from all directions. Visitors can reach the lake via Interstate 75 and Interstate 475, with exists marked and road signs leading directly to the park gates. From Thomaston and the west, Georgia Highway 74 leads to the lake vicinity. From Columbus, U.S. 80 carries the visitor near the lake.

Tobesofkee's waters beckon, the fishing is challenging and rewarding, the picnicking, camping, water skiing and swimming excellent, and the lake is easy to reach from most places in Georgia. Maybe you ought to go . . . real soon. ●



The Old Ways of Fishing

by Michael Gillen

One of our Indian young men, this evening, caught a very large salmon trout, weighing about fifteen pounds, which he presented to the colonel, who ordered it to be served up for supper. The Indian struck this fish, with a reed harpoon, pointed very sharp, barbed, and hardened by fire.

This is how William Bartram, writing in the late eighteenth century, described one old way of fishing on "a branch of the Broad River" in Georgia.

Spears, or "harpoons" as they were sometimes called, were a common means of fishing by Indians in this area. Adair, writing in 1775 has provided us with another good description of Indian spear fishing.

Those Indians who are unacquainted with the use of barbed irons, are very expert in striking fish out of their canoes, with long sharp pointed green canes, which are well bearded, and hardened in the fire. In Savannah River, I have often accompanied them in killing sturgeons with those green swamp harpoons, and which they did with pleasure and ease; for, when we discovered the fish, we soon thrust into their bodies one of the harpoons.

The use of the word "gig" goes back many years and appears in this 1705 account of Indian spear fishing at night:

They make a Hearth in the middle of their canoe, raising it within Two Inches of the Edge; upon this they lay their burning Light-Wood, split into small Shivers, each splinter whereof will blaze and burn end for end, like a Candle: 'tis one man's work to tend this Fire and keep it flaming. At each end of the canoe stands an Indian, with a gig, or pointed spear, setting the canoe forward with the Butt-end of the spear, as gently as he can, by that means stealing upon the fish, without any noise or disturbing of the water. Then they with great Dexterity, dart these spears into the fish, and so take 'em.

A Cherokee Indian named Swimmer is shown here with some of the methods of fishing commonly used by Indians: (clockwise from top) a deer horn fish hook; horse chestnut, one of the natural poisons used to temporarily stun fish so they can be easily gathered; spear fishing or harpooning.



Illustration: Michael Nunn

Many of the Indians who lived in the area that was to become Georgia were expert fishermen whose methods were varied, ingenious and could be very efficient. A number of old ways of fishing known to Georgians well into this century, such as baskets, traps and trot lines, had actually been used and perfected by the Indian hundreds of years before.

The so-called "trot line" is an example of a simple invention whose design has not changed much since the original design. There were as many variations in Indian trot lines as there were in those used later on. Minor differences were determined by individual preferences in design, by the dimensions of the area they were to be used in, and by available materials. But they were all essentially the same.

The basic trot line consisted of one long line which was stretched out and anchored, in one fashion or another, at each end. Smaller lines with hooks were attached at regular intervals. A trot line could be as long as a creek or river was wide and was tied securely to a tree or some other fixed object on each side. Others were secured to submerged objects so as to avoid detection. Some Indians were known to space their trot lines between two grounded canoes.

The following eighteenth century description of an Indian trot line (here referred to as a "net") sounds much like those used long after the Indian had disappeared from along Georgia's rivers and creeks:

These nets are really only about six fathoms (36 feet) long. A number of small lines are fastened to these a foot apart. At the end of each line is a fishhook where they put a little piece of hominy dough or a little piece of meat. With that they do not fail to take fishes weighing more than fifteen to twenty pounds.

Just about the only difference between the trot line described above and one of more recent vintage, would be the size of the "fishes".

The Indian was good at fishing with no more than the good old hook and line. Hooks were fashioned from bone or wood or a combination of the two. Animal sinew was commonly used for line though other materials were used, including a type of bark.

One method of making hooks from bone and wood, used by Indians in the Florida area, might well have been used by Indians in Georgia, too. It was described in a 1902 publication by Cushing:

The shanks or stems of these were about three inches long, shaped much like those of our own, but made from the conveniently carved main branches of the forked twigs of some tough springy kind of wood. These were cut off at the forks in such manner as to leave a portion of the stems to serve as butts, which were girdled and notched in, so that the sharp, barbed points of deer bone, which were about half as long as the shanks and leaned in towards them, could be firmly attached with sinew and black rubber-gum cement.

Some good examples of smaller, all-bone fish-hooks are on display at Ocmulgee Mounds National Monument in Macon, along with various stone sinkers also used by Indians in hook and line fishing.



The Indians were expert at making "baskets" for catching fish. This practice carried well into this century and eventually saw such materials as chicken wire and barrel wire incorporated into their construction. By and large, though, most baskets even of this century were made of various kinds of wood.

There were many variations in construction of fish baskets, both in size, material and the manner in which fish were removed from them. But, as with trot lines, they were all essentially the same. The following description of an Indian fish basket, from a 1909 publication, would also serve to describe baskets of other periods, both earlier and later:

These were quite large, being ordinarily about three feet or more in diameter and from six to ten feet in length. They were cylindrical in shape, with one open end and an indented funnel-shaped passage-way leading into the interior. The warp splints of



Engraving number 13 from DeBry, 1590.
New York Public Library

this indenture ended in sharp points left free. As these pointed inward, they allowed the fish to pass readily in entering, but offered an obstruction to their exit. The other end . . . was closed up, but the covering could be removed to remove the contents. Willow sticks composed the warp standards, while the wicker filling was of shaved hickory splints. The trap was weighted down in the water and chunks of meat were put in for bait.

Pine and oak splits were also commonly used in their construction.

In comparison to the basket described above, many baskets had an inner as well as an outer muzzle leading to the interior. And many baskets were rigged up with small trap doors for placing the bait inside and for removing the catch.

The bait used in baskets was as varied as the baskets themselves. Bits of meat were commonly used, but

bread and even such things as "may pops" ("passion flowers") have been known to meet with success. One old-time basket fisherman had a favorite bait mixture: corn meal, onions, and muscadines. He placed this concoction, or a variation of it, in a small bag in his baskets.

Fish baskets were sometimes referred to as "finger traps" because of the pointed, finger-like pieces that the funnel-shaped muzzles of the basket were made of.

An excellent example of a five foot long, all wood, double muzzle basket is on display in the Georgia State Museum in the Capitol Building in Atlanta. The label on it includes the words, "used during earlier hard times in Georgia."

The fishweir, or "trap" as it was commonly called, was one of the more efficient methods of catching fish. It consisted of some sort of a dam with several openings where box-shaped traps caught and held the fish. Some Indian fishweirs had cone-shaped traps, similar to the fish basket. The "dams" themselves actually allowed water to pass through, but fish could only pass through at the openings where the traps were placed.

Fishweir dams were often made of stones, but some Indian tribes were skilled at making fence-like dams out of reeds, small saplings and other material. One of the earliest descriptions of an Indian fishweir of this type is found in this account of 1562:

(They were) built in the water with great reeds, so well and cunningly set together after the fashion of labyrinth, with many turns and crooks, which it was impossible to construct without much skill and industry.

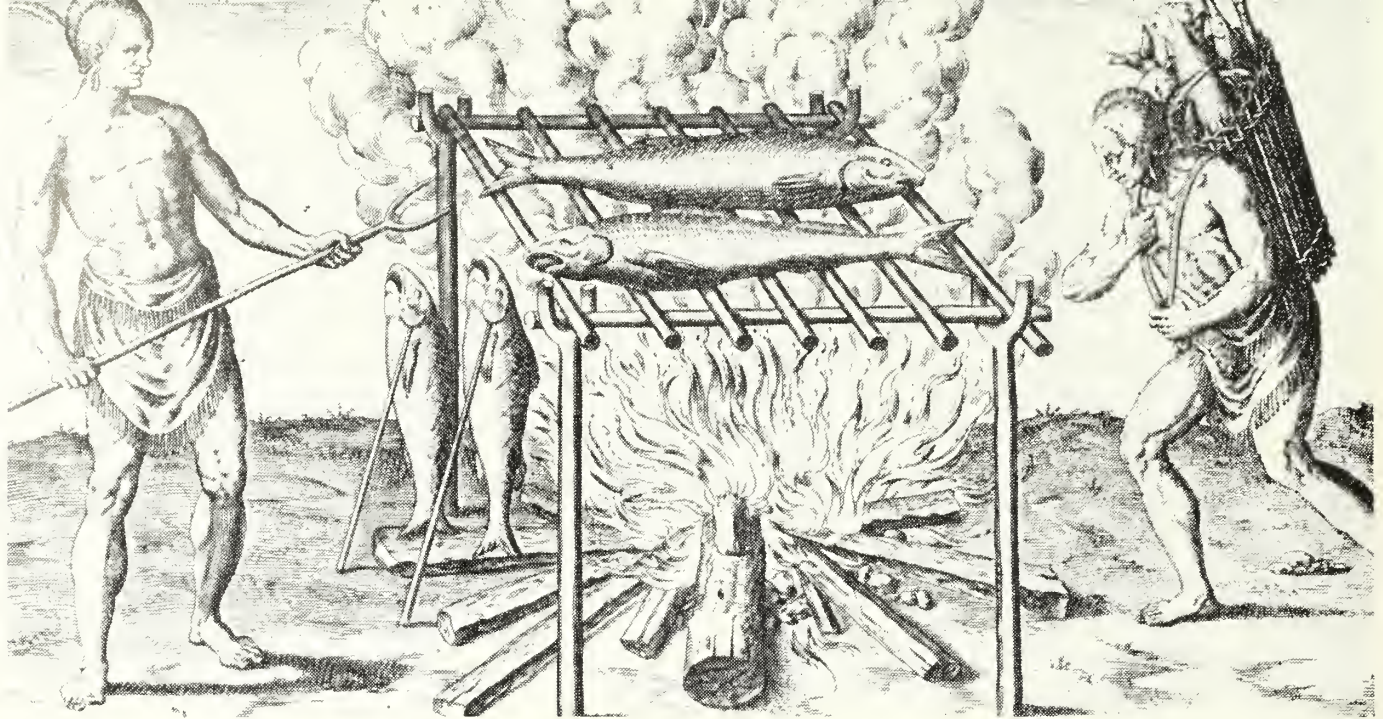
Stone fishweirs were a common way of fishing by the Indians and later settlers and were still being used well into this century. The remains of some stone fishing dams are still visible along a number of Georgia's creeks and rivers.

Some of the later fishweirs were constructed using logs secured to the riverbed with iron pins, behind which stones were piled. The logs were placed end to end, zigzagging across the river, with gaps for the boxes. The natural gaps in rock shoals were often taken advantage of with the boxes being placed in these areas; thus, the zigzag look to some fishweirs.

The opening of the traps, in any case, faced upstream so that the current would aid in moving the fish towards the traps and keeping them in. The boxes were normally weighted down with rocks.

What was probably the most efficient Indian method of fishing involved the use of a "V"-shaped dam with the point of the "V", the only opening, facing downstream. A large box would be placed at this opening, and a group of Indians would stand by to scoop the fish out. Another group of Indians, as this 1775 account describes, would go further upstream and would then fasten a wreath of long grape vines together, to reach across the river, with stones fastened at proper distances to rake the bottom; they will swim a mile with it whooping and plunging all the way, driving the fish before them . . .

In this way, sometimes hundreds of fish could be driven



Engraving number 14 from DeBry, 1590.
New York Public Library

through the opening of the “V” and into the trap. This method was especially effective in areas where shad made periodic journeys upriver. Dams would be built behind them and then fish would be driven down into the Indians’ trap.

Various natural poisons were used in earlier times for catching fish. The Creek Indians who fished along the Chattahoochee River were known to use poisons, especially in the late summer when the river was low and fish became trapped in pools. At other times dams were constructed to make small ponds where poisons could be used.

This late eighteenth century account vividly describes the use of natural poisons for fishing in this area:

In a dry summer season, they gather horse chestnuts, and different sorts of roots, which having pounded pretty fine, and steeped a while in a trough, they scatter this mixture over the surface of a middle-sized pond, and stir it about with poles, till the water is sufficiently impregnated with the intoxicating bitter. The fish are soon inebriated, and make to the surface of the water, with their bellies uppermost. The fishers gather them in baskets, and barbicue the largest, covering them carefully over at night to preserve them from the supposedly putrifying influence of the moon. It seems that fish caught in this manner are not poisoned, but only stupified; for they prove very wholesome food for us, who frequently use them. By experiments, when they are speedily moved into good water, they revive in a few minutes.

The Creek Indians were also known to use ground up buckeye and the roots of a plant called “devil’s shoe string” to effectively stun fish. Alabama Indians called buckeye “ayona” and used it in this fashion. Both the small branches and the fruit of the buckeye plant were used. Other effective natural poisons included red willow and pokeweed roots.

Some Creek Indians performed a ceremony before

using poison for fishing. They would rub on their faces a liquid made from whichever toxic plant they were going to use in fishing, and would then drink a small amount of it as well. They believed that, unless this were done, the fish would hide and could not be caught.

Of course there were other old methods of fishing, too many to cover in this article. Indians used bows and arrows with lines attached to them to catch fish. Various kinds of nets were also used by Indians, including a type made from “wathoo,” which consisted of narrow strands of bark taken from elm trees.

Most of the old ways of fishing described in this article are no longer used in Georgia because they simply do not conform to present-day conservation practices. For the Indian whose survival depended on catching large quantities of fish, highly efficient methods had to be used. But fishermen were fewer then, and fish were more plentiful.

Clearly, the times have changed. We now know that without regulations and proper management it wouldn’t take much for species of fish to be wiped out in just about any given area.

But we can “fish” for as much information on these and other old methods of fishing as we want to. For those readers interested in doing so, here’s a partial list of sources consulted for this article:

- Antiquities of the Southern Indians, Particularly of the Georgia Tribes* by Charles C. Jones, Jr. (1872).
- The Indians of the Southeastern United States* by John R. Swanton (Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 137, Washington 1946)
- Pioneer Days Along the Ocmulgee* by Fussell Chalker (Carrollton, Georgia, 1970)
- Travels Through North Carolina and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* by William Bartram (originally published in 1792—available in many later editions)

Michael Gillen, formerly curator at Jarrell Plantation, is now a writer in New York.

SIMPLE SAFETY

E. BURCH ROBERTS

The next time you plan an outdoor trip, add a little safety insurance. Practicing precautionary measures while hunting, fishing, hiking or camping is not a costly venture and simple safety tips are easy to learn. Emergency situations can and do happen to both experienced and novice sportsmen. However, emergencies can be prevented by taking a few precautions before tackling the outdoors. By spending only a small amount of time and money, you can become adequately prepared to overcome most emergency situations that could occur while in the outdoors.

Getting lost is one of the most common outdoor emergencies. Each year many persons become disoriented, lose their way and suffer until they are located. It is this suffering that makes being lost so serious. The discomfort may be mental or physical and may occur in varying degrees.

Minor suffering such as embarrassment or insect bites are unpleasant but last only a short time. These situations usually only convince the victim to take precautions against getting lost on his next outdoor excursion.

Major suffering, on the other hand,

is quite different. Not only must the discomfort of being lost be dealt with, but the mishap is also intensified. For example, physical injuries such as broken arms or legs which would normally require only routine medical attention may result in permanent impairment of the limb because treatment was delayed.

Since starvation and dehydration are rare occurrences in Georgia, mental anguish and other physical impairments are generally considered to be more commonly found among those who have been lost in wooded areas. The effects of such a frightening experience may continue even after the rescue. Major distress induced by being lost or by accidents occurring while lost out-of-doors may cause the victim to strongly reject the idea of ever entering a wilderness area again.

To avoid getting lost in a wooded area initial precautions should be taken. You should be familiar with the geographical arrangement of the area. Such knowledge is easily obtained through maps of varying detail. Then, after getting the "lay of the land" fixed in mind, you should get a compass and use it.

Perhaps the most dangerous threat

to Georgians who are lost out-of-doors is hypothermia. Hypothermia results from a subnormal lowering of the body's temperature. The lowering is usually caused by exposure to elements like wind, rain, and cold. If the body temperature falls to 78 degrees, twenty degrees below the normal body temperature, the victim can fall into a stupor. If the body heat is not raised immediately, coma and death could follow.

While hypothermia occurs more often in colder regions, it is an underestimated danger for the southern sportsman as well. Unbelievably, hypothermia can strike when the temperature is as warm as fifty degrees Fahrenheit.

Hypothermia is easily developed after getting wet from the rain, falling into a lake or river, from excess perspiration, or from not being able to locate shelter out of the wind.

Finding shelter from the wind is very important since wind chill is a major cause of hypothermia. Moving air draws heat from the body. For example, a twenty mile per hour wind can make fifty degree weather feel like thirty-two degrees. If the victim is wet, the cooling effects are magnified. It should be noted that a twenty mile per hour wind is really only a strong breeze.

Hypothermia may not be immediately detected since it develops slowly. This is why it is necessary to know the symptoms. At first, the victim will feel cold. This coldness will grow steadily into numbness. Other symptoms follow: irrational actions, generally progressing to the loss of control of the arms or legs, and then stupor or a lack of awareness.

However, with only a small amount of preventive action the effects of hypothermia can be nullified. Since hypothermia results from the body's exposure to the weather, the first precaution to take against this condition is to locate shelter. A cave, fallen tree, lean-to or any object that will reduce the effects of the wind and keep you dry should be adequate.

A second precaution against hypothermia is to get warm. This is especially true if you are not moving or



cannot move as non-mobility requires added warmth for survival. A fire is perhaps the fastest way to supply heat; therefore, matches are needed for building a fire unless you are especially proficient at rubbing two sticks together. And even then, a match is usually faster.

To be useful matches must be strikable. Therefore, they should be kept in a waterproof container. A good match holder is a plastic 35mm film can. These "cans" are small, light and, most importantly, waterproof. They will hold 25 strike anywhere matches and the side panel from the match box in case a dry rock can't be found to use for striking. Also, if the kindling wood is too wet to burn, the film can may be slit up its sides and set on the fire as a fire starter. After filling the can with matches, leave enough space to

include a long shoe string which can be used as a tourniquet or simply as a replacement for a broken lace.

In addition to warmth, a fire will also serve as a beacon useful in signaling for assistance if it is needed. Shelter and warmth will usually serve as adequate protection from hypothermia. Therefore, when you are outdoors and feel yourself getting uncomfortably cold, find shelter and light a fire regardless of the temperature.

If there is one item that is an outdoor necessity, it is a knife. The type or size of knife isn't important as long as it has at least one sharp blade. It can be used for shaving splinters from sticks for starting fires or for cutting brush to make shelters, crutches, or splints.

When going outdoors in Georgia you need to be aware of the possi-



bility of being snake bitten. Four species of venomous snake are found in Georgia. The best precaution to take against snake bite is to be alert. Watch where you walk, climb or sit, and be especially careful where you place your hands and feet.

You should remember that snakes are cold-blooded creatures and need warmth and shelter; therefore they are often found near rocks and logs. When danger or the elements threaten, they quickly retreat to find shelter.

The safest way to avoid an unfriendly reptile is to use extreme caution when turning over rocks or logs. Also, do not reach blindly into shallow caves or holes without first checking to see what is there. When climbing or hiking in hilly areas do not reach or pull yourself up or onto a rock or bank that shields anything

lying on top. This is especially true on hills with a southern exposure, particularly in the early spring or fall since such places are favored den areas. When approaching a high bank or large rock, toss a few pebbles up first. This will usually cause any snakes resting there to crawl away making it safe for you to continue your climb.

In addition to being alert, a snake bite kit is always a useful item to include on a trip. There are several types available ranging from kits containing an injectable anti-venom to the older varieties where you tie off and cut the area, then remove the venom with a suction device. Each kit has directions included. However, the best piece of advice to remember when dealing with snake bites is to tie a constricting band, not a tourniquet, between the bite and

the heart. Then, get to a doctor as quickly as possible. Placing a cold pack on the bite will also help to slow the spread of the venom until medical help can be found. Know how to describe the snake that bit you. You will surely be asked this when you reach the hospital.

Locating a doctor is preferred to using a snake bite kit in the field. Only one person died of snake bite in the U.S. last year, but many individuals lost the use of their fingers and toes because tendons and blood vessels were cut when using snake bite kits. The time involved would determine the action you take, however.

A knowledge of basic first aid is always useful for anyone who roams the outdoors. Although a first aid course will require more time on your part than any of the other insurance factors mentioned, the time and effort spent will be valuable if you should ever need it. The Red Cross and other community organizations in all cities offer these courses several times each year. Contact them for further information.

The last precaution to take is perhaps the simplest and possibly the most useful tip for outdoor safety: leave with someone at home information about where you are going, what route or trail you are traveling, and when and where you expect to arrive after your outing. This is important since any delay in your return usually signals that assistance is needed and could make a big difference in the event of an emergency.

These precautions are only simple steps for aiding in basic outdoor emergencies. They will not work miracles and are not intended to do so. Emergencies that arise in the outdoors will rarely be as simple or as easy to solve as those outlined here. These precautions are only an effort to present low-cost, but necessary ideas for insuring a safer and happier outdoor trip. ●

Burch Roberts is a freelance writer and photographer. A native Georgian, he goes hunting, fishing and camping as often as possible, especially on the coast.



The Perversity of Fishing

By Gib Johnston
Photos by Ed Brock



I like fishing. I don't really know why because I never do well at it. My son, Gip, however, is a different breed. He fishes hard and long and will outdo me with a rod and reel any day of the week. He catches fish when no one else does. He fishes when no one else does, which could explain his uncanny success.

When my friend Dennis Livingston asked us to meet him in Monroe County last year when the white bass were running and said we would catch fish until our arms ached, I waited anxiously for the phone call. At last, I thought, this will be my big opportunity to do at least as well as my son. Surely he wouldn't embarrass me this time.

The call finally came and we lit out before daylight and were on the scene about sunrise, ready to load up with white bass. **WHITE BASS?** As a boy in South Georgia I had caught largemouth bass (better known there as trout) and had heard of smallmouth, spotted, striped, redeye, coosa and channel bass, but what is a white bass? It took on the aura of some strange, foreign thing. We'll catch some, I thought, and find out more about them later.

The white bass fishing that Dennis so highly touted was not all he said it would be. My arms didn't ache at all; in fact, true to form, my son caught the only fish taken that day, a nice redeye bass. We didn't see even the slightest hint of the whites. We fished hard all day; the fish just weren't there.

We speculated long and loud about the situation. "They should be here." Maybe it's the weather (it was beautiful); maybe the phase of the moon (it was right for fishing); or the unusual winter (miserable but over); the spawning run was early (or maybe late); our lures were wrong (we had one of every kind known to man). No one could come up with a satisfactory answer except the universal perversity of fish. The curious

thing was that Dennis' enthusiasm about white bass fishing was not changed in the least by this day. "It's still the best catching fish around."

There's no way that a day's fishing with my son and good friends is wasted time and we all vowed to try again . . . soon.

In the meantime, I determined to find out what I could about the white bass.

Another friend of mine, Leon Kirkland, now director of Game and Fish Division, who is never accused of not knowing what there is to be known about Georgia fish and fishing, told me that the white bass (*Roccus chrysops*) is not a native Georgia fish. Until 1958 it was found only in Goat Rock Lake and a few in Lake Allatoona. No one knows how these got in Goat Rock Lake because this fish is native to the Mississippi drainage. All those in Georgia, then as now, come from introduced populations. All Georgia fish come from the population established in Goat Rock sometime before 1958.

From 1958-61, most of the large reservoirs were stocked with white bass taken during the fabled spring spawning run and were caught with hook and line. These fish bite so readily that this was the most efficient method and much less time consuming than nets. (It was probably more fun, too.) For five days each spring during the stocking period, Leon and another biologist would catch 80-120 fish per day by this method plus others in nets.

If these few fish seem inadequate for a major stocking program, consider this: a female white bass will lay from 250,000 to 1 million eggs. At that rate, a few is enough. Only a small percent of these survive the first year, but a small percent of about 500 fish multiplied by 1,000,000 eggs each is a lot of fish.

White bass abound in the reservoirs in Georgia and can be taken year-round. The best fishing is a toss-up between the spring runs and those summer days when the lakes are "slick water" which suddenly begins to boil as a school of whites begins to feed on forage fish, shad, that frantically leap from the water to avoid the voracious whites. It's a sight to behold: schools of shad being chased by schools of white bass being followed by flocks of gulls being followed by hoards of fishermen.

These activity peaks have given the white bass the reputation of a bite-almost-anything fish. A cast with a Shyster, Rooster-tail, Beetle-spin, Mepps, doll-fly or any other small to medium jig, spinner or spoon (of any color) is supposed to produce a fish. And I'm told that for real excitement, a double-rigged jig with one tied about 18 inches above the other, often produces doubles—two fish on one cast.

Any medium size rod and reel will do, and top rate fun comes with one of the ultra-light outfits.

The average size white bass in Georgia will run about 3/4 to 1-1/2 pounds, and anything over two pounds is a "real good fish." A three pounder will get certified in the Big Fish Contest; four pounds will probably be

mounted for the den wall; and five pounds, three ounces would be a new Georgia record; five pounds, six ounces, a new world record. That's the one Gip is after, and I wouldn't dare bet against him.

The white bass is the only temperate bass (or true bass) found in Georgia's fresh water. (Our black basses are in the sunfish family.) They fortunately have the characteristics of their ocean kin of schooling and moving upstream to spawn.

This fish does best in Georgia in the reservoirs of 200 acres plus, and they usually spawn in areas of two to 12 feet deep with sandy or rocky bottoms.

In the spring, when the water reaches 55 to 60° F, the males begin to move up the larger streams to the first impassable barrier or shoal area that concentrates fish and wait for the arrival of the females who show up about a week later. Spawning begins and this piscatorial orgy continues off and on for three to four weeks for as more females arrive to spawn, others return to big water.

The eggs are fertilized as they leave the female's body. They settle into the gravel or sand on the bottom to hatch. Two to four days later the young, true to their kind, form massive schools and spend their time seeking food and a place to hide from larger predators. As they grow, their food changes from minute zooplankton to crustaceans and insects and then to larger insects, crustaceans and small fish, and places to hide become less and less imperative, for they themselves become predators.

Those that survive the first summer are six to eight inches long; then growth slows with colder fall and winter waters. The second year will produce growth to 12 inches or so, and maturity comes soon after this second year. The whites don't usually live longer than five or six years.

I found out that the male white bass and the female striped bass are the unwitting parents of the newest game fish in Georgia, the hybrid bass. This fish, like the mule, is a product of man's manipulation and, like the mule, is in many ways superior to either of his parents but cannot reproduce his own kind. This superiority includes the voracious feeding habits of his white bass daddy and something approaching the size of his striped bass mama which equals a first class sport fish.

The best place to catch a mess of white bass during the spring run is in any of the larger streams above the reservoirs. Sinclair has the oldest population (after Goat Rock), but the state record fish came from Lanier. Take a hint from the fish and move upstream to the first good obstruction, be it dam, shoals or falls. That's the place in April. In the summer, wait for the slick water and watch for the schools. In the fall, white bass often school around bridges.

Being more specific about places to fish would bring more abuse than I'm willing to put up with. Dennis, Gip and I have our place staked out and we're waiting for that phone call. We'll catch a real mess—and maybe I won't let my boy embarrass me this time. ●



TO TEMPT A TROUT

"To Tempt a Trout," a new Department of Natural Resources film, shares the thrill and excitement of fishing for trout in north Georgia. From bait fishing to fly tying, this 20-minute film explores the many tricks and techniques of outsmarting a wily trout.

"To Tempt a Trout" features unusual underwater footage of the fish in their natural environment. And through inter-

views with experienced anglers, it examines the joys of fishing in these unspoiled mountain streams.

Trout fishing long has been a way of life in the north Georgia mountains. Through a variety of management techniques on rivers and creeks, the Department of Natural Resources is preserving, and often improving, this tradition. "To Tempt a Trout" investigates DNR's

programs to stock rivers and streams with both native and hatchery-reared fish. And it takes a look at Waters Creek, Georgia's only trophy trout stream, where the minimum size limit for most fish is 22". "To Tempt a Trout" examines the special habitat that trout require, and it explores unwise development practices that cause the destruction of this habitat.

For the inexperienced fisherman, "To Tempt a Trout" offers a solid introduction to the pleasures of trout fishing. And for the veteran angler, the film provides a refreshing look at his exciting sport. "To Tempt a Trout" is available on a free-loan basis from the Department of Natural Resources, Room 719, 270 Washington St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30334. (404) 656-3530.

A new film from D.N.R.

